

TOWN OF MONTAGUE

FY2026

ANNUAL BUDGET



BUDGET DOCUMENTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS
MONTAGUE, MASSACHUSETTS

Annual Town Meeting May 7, 2025

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TOWN OF MONTAGUE

Finance Committee

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, Massachusetts 01376

413 863-3200 ext. 121

April 9, 2025

Dear Town Meeting Members:

One of the Finance Committee's responsibilities is to report to Town Meeting on the annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year. This booklet includes information and explanations of the major elements of the proposed budget, as well as background on each of the motions you will be asked to vote on. If you would like more details, you can find materials related to this year's budget development process on the Town's website at www.montague-ma.gov/p/374/Annual-Budget-Information, and of course if you have questions, any of us would be happy to speak with you.

The budget we are presenting to you is the result of a collaborative process that started in 2024 with a preliminary revenue forecast and solicitation from department heads and commissions of requests for anticipated budgets, when departments and committees were asked to prepare requests for anticipated capital and operating needs in their areas for Fiscal Year 2026. The Capital Improvements Committee started reviewing capital requests for FY2026 in October, and department heads who were proposing significant staffing changes presented proposals to the Selectboard (acting as the Personnel Board) in December and January.

The Finance Committee and Selectboard had all the initial operating budget and special article requests in hand by mid-December 2024. We reviewed the requests, invited public input, gathered information through written correspondence, researched and asked questions, and discussed our concerns at public meetings in February and March.

The operating budget proposed for the Town was refined by this process, and our input also helped influence decisions about the special articles that would ultimately appear on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. When we reconvened with the Selectboard in mid-March, we received the Capital Improvements Committee's report and recommendations and then worked together to settle on a final budget to propose to you. We look forward to hearing what you think of it in May!

Respectfully, Your Finance Committee:

Dorinda Bell-Upp (Chair), Fred Bowman (Vice Chair), Christopher Menegoni (Clerk),
Francia Wisnewski, John Hanold, Leigh Rae, and Jennifer Waryas

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT TO TOWN MEETING

Fiscal Year 2026

In accordance with the bylaws of the Town, the Montague Finance Committee has investigated the cost of maintenance and expenditures of departments of the Town and here recommend in detail the amounts to be appropriated for each department for the ensuing year. We have also considered articles in Town warrants requiring the appropriation of money throughout the year. We propose a balanced budget of \$35,149,256 to provide municipal services during Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).

Further details on the development of the FY26 budget are available on the Town's website at www.montague-ma.gov/p/374/Annual-Budget-Information. The "Annual Budget Information" section includes a glossary of the terms that are bold-faced in this report, revenue estimates for FY26, line-item budget requests for all town departments, budget narratives, our Capital Improvements Committee's annual report, and other resources.

INTRODUCTION

This budget strives to provide effective municipal programs and services to Montague's residents, while assuring a financially sustainable future. Our **Revenue** estimates reflect our expectations for tax collections, local receipts, and state aid in various forms.

As has been the case in recent years, town departments were asked to submit "level services" budgets, and for the most part they succeeded in finding ways to do so while containing costs. There were new staff positions requested this year by several departments, but only two made it through the personnel board approval process. The first is in the Council on Aging budget with the addition of a part-time Administrative Assistant to assist with the administrative work of the department to allow the Director to focus more on programming and services. The second additional position is in the Farmer's Market budget with the addition of an Assistant Manager to fill in for the Manager in their absence with the Manager position stipend reduced to offset this request.

Montague's financial situation has stabilized in recent years, with an improved bond rating (AA since 2021) and increasing levels of reserves across most accounts with many of them exceeding the limit requirements set in the Montague Financial Policies. This year we have begun discussing the option of using long-term debt for larger capital expenses, and we feel encouraged by efforts to engage in longer-term planning that will ultimately help us make more strategic financial decisions. The Town's new Five-Year Capital Plan, which is updated annually, will be critical to that strategic decision-making process. This plan has been expanded to include more assets of the Town, including guardrails, roads, culverts, etc., to be more comprehensive of future liabilities of the Town.

We are grateful to everyone who has worked with us throughout this annual budget season.

FUNDING GOALS

The Finance Committee pursued several goals while developing this budget:

1. To fund annual needs (both departmental operating budgets and recurring Special Articles) from recurring non-Reserve sources, and to avoid using **Reserves** for nonrecurring projects estimated to cost less than \$25,000. We accomplished this goal again this year, using a combination of **Taxation** and **Free Cash**. Our continued ability to fund the Town's departmental operating budget and the Education assessment using only taxation is a sign of our ongoing fiscal health.
2. To fund the assessment of the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) according to the method described in the [Compact for Funding Education](#), which was ratified in 2009 and reaffirmed in 2019. The agreement was based on a model where Montague allocates 48.5% of defined revenues as the "Affordable Assessment," and that percentage has been used ever since. The funding of this assessment through taxation shows the support and commitment from the Town to the school district. Through an extensive process and joint meetings with various officers from the towns of Gill and Montague, the district's FY26 request matches that figure, and we recommend funding it.
3. To follow the Town's Financial Management Policies, which provide guidelines for capital spending, debt financing, and appropriations to various stabilization accounts. Bond rating agencies encourage towns to establish and follow such guidelines, and the Town's commitment to doing so resulted in favorable interest rates on debt issued in FY2022. These policies include both identifying capital projects of more than \$25,000 that might be eligible for financing through long-term debt and having annual non-excluded debt service costs of at least 5% of the Prior Year's General Operating Revenue.

Our ratio of non-excluded debt service for FY26 is only 0.15%. To raise the percentage of non-excluded debt the Town is proposing using debt to fund a large Phase 2 Sewer Collection System Rehabilitation project for \$3,000,000. This project is to be split between the Town and Sewer Enterprise fund with a 60/40 split where 60% of the debt will belong to the Town and 40% will belong to the Sewer Enterprise fund. The estimated tax increase to the average taxpayer of Montague when this project is bonded is \$26.57 a year. Having certain levels of debt service within the operating budget is considered sound practice as it illustrates a community's ability to maintain infrastructure and capital assets within its regular revenues. The remainder of the FY2026 capital projects were recommended to be funded with

free cash with the focus on retaining the Town's Capital Stabilization Fund for future requests, because there is no expected decrease in the need for capital purchases in coming years.

Some notable accomplishments from this year:

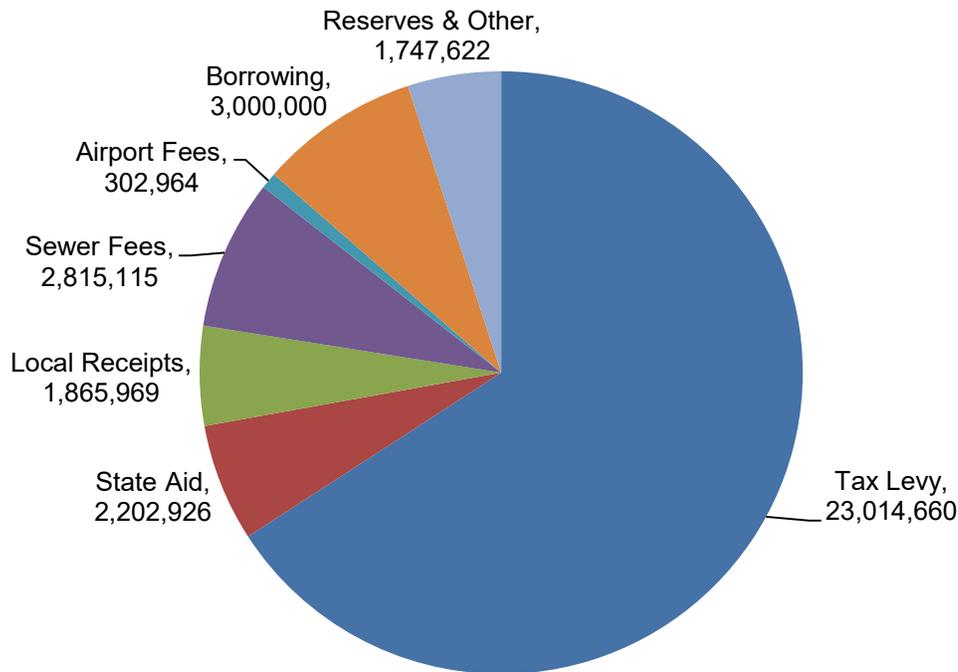
- In the summer of 2024, the Finance Committee completed a review of the Affordable Assessment with the district. The conclusion was that the Affordable Assessment is still a fair compromise, and that real advocacy would be better directed at the state to reexamine the Chapter 70 formula.
- The fall of 2024, the Finance Committee successfully transitioned to a new Town Accountant following the retirement of long-time Town Accountant, Carolyn Olsen. This has occurred at the same time as changes in many other leadership positions in other Town offices, which creates an opportunity to revisit processes from different perspectives with hopes for innovation.
- The FY25 tax rate, set in December 2024, preserved \$1.4M in **Excess Capacity** for Montague, and the **Revenue** estimate for FY26 continues to maintain excess capacity by taxing the Town \$1.1 million below the tax levy. Montague's ability to raise revenue sufficient for its needs without taxing to the annual levy limit is an indicator of fiscal health and provides a reserve for possible future revenue reductions or capital needs.
- Contract negotiations for the bargaining units, covering 2026 to 2028, were substantially completed and they incorporated the greater part of Montague's acceptance of the Collins Center Wage and Class study that was initiated in FY2024.

Revenues

Massachusetts General Law requires municipalities to prepare an annual budget that balances revenues with expenditures. The revenue side of our budget is derived primarily from five sources: Property Taxes, State Aid, Local Receipts, Enterprise Fund (Clean Water Facility [CWF] and Airport) revenues, and Reserves (principally Free Cash or Stabilization Funds). A summary table with revenue and expense comparisons to FY25 and FY26 is on page 10 of this report.

The following chart illustrates the proportion of revenues expected from each source. Please note that later, in the Motions, when "**Taxation**" is named as a funding source, **it includes the combination of property taxes, state aid, and local receipts.**

REVENUE HIGHLIGHTS



Property Taxes Net levy revenue is estimated to be 4.37% higher than FY25. The proposed budget assumes that property will be taxed to a level of \$1.1M below the **Levy Limit**. The Tax Levy includes revenue from local taxes on residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property.

The Tax Levy also includes **New Growth**, which is estimated at \$200,000. Historically, Montague has only budgeted the normal levels of residential growth. This year we have budgeted new growth at a higher amount, but still at half of what the 5-year average is. While in recent years Montague has benefitted several times from unanticipated New Growth, we have been advised to estimate only the more historically normal levels of growth, since personal property new growth – attributable largely to utility companies – is both volatile and unknown until the fall.

In FY2025 the average single family home value for Montague was \$295,248, with an average tax bill of \$4,491. The FY2026 proposed budget is estimated to increase the average tax bill by \$174.20 annually. Please note that this estimate does not include any valuation increases and only an estimate of new growth, as the final numbers will not be known until the Fall of 2025 before the tax rate is set in November, so this estimate is based off current FY2025 valuations. Other factors that could shift before the final taxes are set include changes to state aid, adjustments of local receipt estimates, votes to taxation at the fall Special Town Meeting, and changes to the split tax rate.

State Aid The budget projections use the Governor’s state aid figures, which provide a 5.6% increase over FY26. State Aid comprises about 8% of our planned revenue, so Montague should be able to adapt to any changes that occur, including altered state or federal funding.

Local Receipts The local receipts estimate is a slight increase over the FY25 estimate with a notable drop in the SRO Reimbursements due to Gill Montague Regional School District voting to not fund the School Resource Officer for FY26.

	FY24 Estimated	FY25 Estimated	FY26 Estimated	% of Total
Local Receipts				
Excise/Meal Taxes	\$849,490	\$846,000	\$871,025	46.7%
Penalties & Fines	\$147,000	\$145,000	\$148,505	8.0%
Charges for Trash Disposal	\$304,000	\$275,000	\$280,500	15.0%
Rental - 50% Kearsarge	\$86,235	\$70,769	\$79,831	4.3%
SRO Reimbursements	\$142,500	\$142,500	\$77,500	4.2%
All Other	\$414,265	\$379,827	\$408,608	21.9%
	\$1,943,490	\$1,859,096	\$1,865,969	100.0%

Reserves include **Free Cash, Stabilization Funds**, and other miscellaneous funds. The proposed budget for FY26 uses \$1,255,200 of Free Cash for regular Special Articles and leaves a balance of \$51,826 to be carried over to next year.

We are recommending the use of \$325,000 from the Town Capital Stabilization Fund, \$60,000 from Cannabis Impact Fee Stabilization, and \$67,900 from Canal District Improvement Stabilization for Special Articles this year. The background on the motions includes an explanation of the funding source recommendations for articles.

Airport and Sewer Revenues Unlike most Town services, the Airport and the Clean Water Facility are **Enterprise Funds**. These operations collect fees from those who use their services along with other revenues, and that income is dedicated to funding their operations.

Airport revenues did not meet their goal for FY24 because of the delay of the solar project. This resulted in Town funding in FY25 and will continue to be an issue for FY26 and will again require some Town funding. A grant funds much of the debt service, and the remaining balance of the Pioneer property debt service will be funded from Town Sale of Real Estate. While the Airport continues to pursue both this solar project and other revenue opportunities, it is likely that continued assistance from the general fund will be needed for a few more years. The Finance Committee is committed to work with the Airport to support a vision of self-sustainability.

At the CWF, sewer revenues include residential and industrial sewer bills and septage fees. The revenue proportion has moved towards residential users since the closure of the last paper mill in Montague. The Town also pays a user fee to CWF to cover the cost of treating Inflow and Infiltration (I & I) in the system.

Education Revenue

Although it does not directly affect the Town's budget, Chapter 70 and Chapter 71 State Aid to local school districts is an important element of their funding, distinct from the Town's assessment contributions. The Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) has met the Affordable Assessment target, and the Franklin County Technical School's assessment has leveled off after the decrease in enrollment of Montague students last year.

American Rescue Plan Act (APRA)

This act provides funding for Town needs that do not appear in the budget. The provisions of this act (ARPA) provided supplemental funds in FY21 through FY23 totaling over \$2.4M. These funds were all allocated by the deadline of December 31, 2024. They are noted here because they have enabled over \$1.36 million of critical investments in capital needs in the Clean Water Facility, \$588k on general capital improvements for the Town, and \$506K for economic and community recovery efforts. Projects that are under contract but not completed include the Avenue A streetscape project, screw pump project, septage receiving station, Town Hall Annex solar, and others.

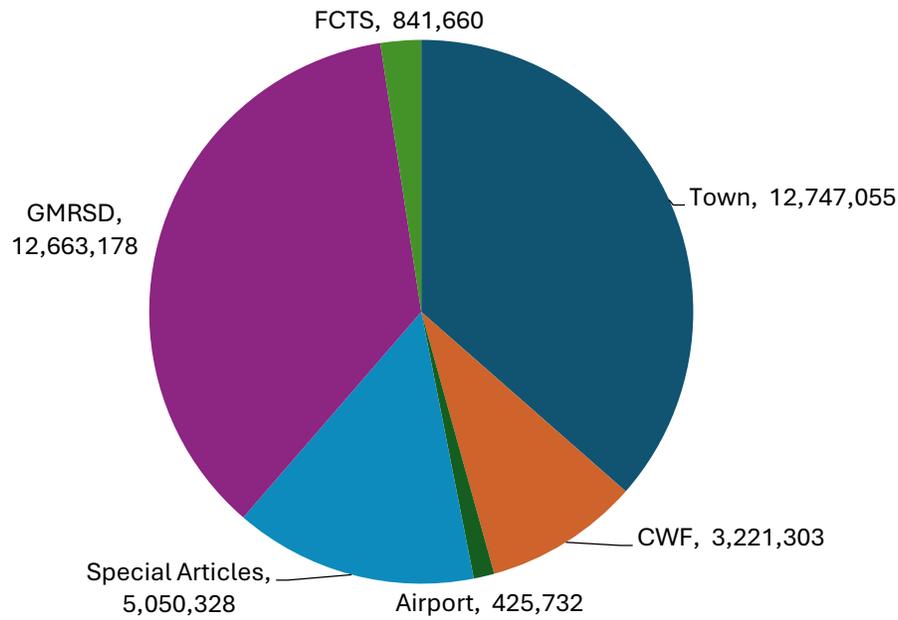
Expenditures

Expenditures are grouped into four basic categories: Town Operating, Education, Enterprise Funds, and Special Articles. Education (GMRSD + FCTS) takes the largest share, at 39%, followed by Town Operating at 37%, Enterprise Funds at 10%, and Special Articles at 14%. A summary table with revenue and expense comparisons to FY25 and FY26 is on page 10 of this report.

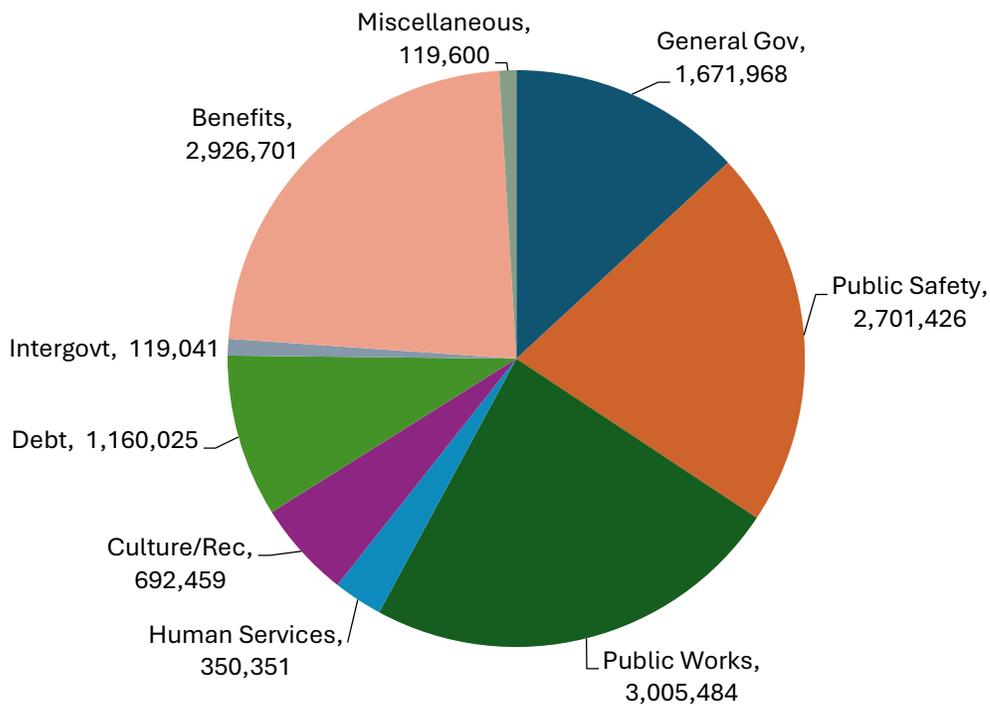
The charts on the next page show the allocations of the total appropriations being requested and the Town Operating budget.

Changes and items of note for specific budgets are noted under the relevant article's (4-10) background information.

Total Appropriations



Town Operating Budget Allocation:



The categories on the pie chart shown above correspond to lines on Schedule III, which is addressed in Article 4.

LOOKING FORWARD

The FY26 Budget that is being presented supports Montague's long-term goals and helps to continue to establish a sustainable path for the future. This budget was built with financial responsibility in mind by continuing to add to, or saving, our reserves and using only established revenue sources to fund continuing operations.

The age and condition of town-owned buildings and equipment continues to be a concern. While we have dedicated certain revenue sources for the Town Capital Stabilization Fund (such as the Kearsarge property lease, retail cannabis sales tax, and set percentage from Taxation) the annual appropriations will not come close to addressing the scope of our infrastructure needs.

At present the Town's fiscal condition is relatively healthy, and the Reserve funds we have funded diligently over the years are now a resource we can draw on for internal stability in the externally unpredictable financial environment of the future. Commitment and resourcefulness of our Town employees also continues to be a source of strength, and we urge you to support their efforts to ensure that the Town's operations and programs will continue to meet our needs.

As we look ahead, we acknowledge that there are future operating challenges for the Airport (revenue shortfalls) and the Clean Water Facility (increase in operating costs). We also acknowledge that there are large future capital needs on the horizon at the Clean Water Facility, library, and school.

We will continue to work in collaboration with the Selectboard and Capital Improvements Committee to formulate and follow a clear plan to manage the Town's assets in a responsible manner. As always, we invite both general comments and specific questions from residents and Town Meeting members.

Respectfully submitted:

Dorinda Bell-Upp (Chair), Fred Bowman (Vice Chair), Christopher Menegoni (Clerk),
Francia Wisnewski, John Hanold, Leigh Rae, and Jennifer Waryas

	HISTORICAL ATM BUDGET SUMMARY				% Incr
REVENUES	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	
Net Tax Levy	20,877,816	21,570,869	22,191,924	23,113,552	4.2%
State Aid	1,879,826	1,914,986	2,085,265	2,202,926	5.6%
Local Receipts	1,809,276	2,027,000	1,934,538	1,865,969	-3.5%
Other Available	593,813	764,599	254,541	708,072	178.2%
Reserved Receipts	49,950	53,250	52,737	52,250	-0.9%
Free Cash	251,242	2,180,701	314,000	1,255,200	299.8%
Borrowing	0	0	1,120,300	3,000,000	167.8%
Airport Fees	316,015	426,965	286,043	302,964	5.9%
Sewer User Fees	2,605,938	2,719,224	2,759,825	2,841,377	3.0%
Total Revenues	28,383,876	31,657,594	30,999,173	35,342,310	14.0%
EXPENSES					
General Government	1,531,370	1,680,319	1,663,222	1,671,968	0.5%
Public Safety	2,459,815	2,650,917	2,763,598	2,701,426	-2.3%
Public Works	2,501,850	2,774,507	2,940,162	3,005,484	2.2%
Human Services	295,827	310,537	305,173	350,351	14.8%
Culture & Recreation	604,366	666,139	685,159	692,459	1.1%
Debt Service	1,162,189	1,154,319	1,158,857	1,160,025	0.1%
Intergovernmental	110,647	113,924	116,874	119,041	1.9%
Employee Benefits	2,391,280	2,490,334	2,657,083	2,926,701	10.2%
General Insurance	119,600	120,600	119,600	119,600	0.0%
WPCF	2,872,377	3,006,124	3,119,324	3,221,303	3.3%
AIRPORT	316,015	426,965	419,677	425,732	1.4%
FCTS Assessment	1,029,566	1,053,018	837,356	841,660	0.5%
GMRSD Assessment	11,341,466	11,809,191	12,143,442	12,663,178	4.3%
Special Articles	1,331,498	3,398,085	2,069,646	5,443,382	163.0%
Total Expenses	28,067,866	31,654,979	30,999,173	35,342,310	14.0%

SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

#	TOPIC	AMOUNT REQUESTED	% OF TOTAL	FUNDING SOURCE
1	Annual Reports			
2	Elected Wages			
3	Appointed Wages			
4	Town Operating Budget	12,747,055	36.08%	Taxation
5	CWF Operating Budget	3,221,303	9.11%	Taxation/Sewer User Fees
6	Airport Operating Budget	425,732	1.20%	Taxation/Sale of RE/Airport Rev
7	Airport Fuel Revolving			
8	Colle Operating Budget	52,250	0.15%	Colle
9	FCTS Assessment	841,660	2.38%	Taxation
10	GMRSD Assessment	12,663,178	35.84%	Taxation
11	Smith Voc and Agr High School	59,000	0.17%	Taxation
12	NAGE and UE Wage and Class	125,154	0.35%	Taxation/Sewer User Fees
13	Library Accessibility/Upgrades	10,000	0.03%	Free Cash
14	<u>CWF Articles</u>			
	Used Mini-Excavator	60,000	0.17%	CWF Retained Earnings
	Generators	67,800	0.19%	CWF Retained Earnings
	Two Thickened Sludge Pumps	104,000	0.29%	CWF Retained Earnings
15	Phase 2-Sewer Collection Rehab	3,000,000	8.49%	CWF/Town Debt
16	DPW 10-Wheel Dump Truck	365,000	1.03%	Free Cash
17	DPW Dump Truck	325,000	0.92%	Town Capital Stabilization
18	<u>DPW Vehicles</u>			
	Camera Van	70,000	0.20%	Free Cash
	Pickup Truck	65,000	0.18%	Free Cash
19	<u>DPW Projects</u>			
	Oakman Street Slope Stabilization	60,000	0.17%	Free Cash
	Non-Chapter 90 Paving	30,000	0.08%	Free Cash
20	Meadow Rd Guardrails	200,000	0.57%	Free Cash
21	DPW Equipment	36,470	0.10%	Taxation
22	<u>Town Project Articles</u>			
	Millers Falls Library Storefront	39,000	0.11%	Free Cash
	Unity Park Upgrades	125,000	0.35%	Free Cash
	Montague Center Complete Streets	91,200	0.26%	Free Cash
23	FRTA Bus Stop	60,000	0.17%	Cannabis Impact Stabilization
24	Keith Footbridge	67,900	0.19%	Canal District Utility Impr Stabilization
25	<u>Annual Transfers to Reserves</u>			
	Conservation Fund	10,000	0.03%	Taxation
	Town Capital Stabilization	231,890	0.66%	Taxation/Free Cash
	GMRSD Stabilization	88,718	0.25%	Taxation/Free Cash
	OPEB Trust Fund	100,000	0.28%	Taxation/Free Cash
26	FirstLight Hydro PILOT			
27	Personal Property Thresholds			
28	Tax Title Payment Agreement			
29	Unclaimed Property			
30	Shea Theater Lease			
31	FRCOG Charter			
		35,342,310	100.00%	

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF MONTAGUE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MAY 7, 2025
Expected Continuation Date May 14, 2025 (if needed)**

MOTIONS

ARTICLE 1. Annual Reports (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to receive the reports of the Officers of the Town and any committees.

Background: This article appears regularly in the annual warrant and allows the receipt of reports.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

ARTICLE 2. Wages for Elected Officials (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to fix the salaries of all elected officials as required by law for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, as set forth in Schedule I, Elected Officials.

**SCHEDULE I
Elected Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
MODERATOR	500	500	500
SELECTBOARD			
Chairman	2,640	2,640	2,640
Second/Third Members	2,400	2,400	2,400
BOARD OF ASSESSOR			
Chairman	1,980	1,980	1,980
Second/Third Members	1,800	1,800	1,800
BOARD OF HEALTH			
Chairman	1,980	1,980	1,980
Second/Third Members	1,800	1,800	1,800
TREE WARDEN	1,764		

*Changed to appointed STM 2/12/25

Background: This article appears regularly in the annual warrant. All stipends were reviewed by the Finance Committee and Selectboard prior to the FY26 budget process.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 5-0-1

ARTICLE 3. Wages for Appointed Officials (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to fix the salaries of all appointed officials as required by law for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, as set forth in Schedule II, Appointed Officials.

SCHEDULE II			
Appointed Officials			
<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>FY26</u>	<u>FY26</u>
	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>REQUEST</u>	<u>RECOMMEND</u>
<u>ANNUAL STIPENDS</u>			
BOARD OF REGISTRARS (3)	625	625	625
BOARD OF REGISTRARS TOWN CLERK	900	900	900
EMERGENCY MGMT DIRECTOR	6,444	6,444	6,444
ANIMAL INSPECTOR	1,764	1,764	1,764
BARN INSPECTOR	1,400	1,400	1,400
IT COORDINATOR	2,352	2,352	2,352
POLICE IT ADMINISTRATOR	6,000	6,000	6,000
FOREST WARDEN	1,882	1,882	1,882
TREE WARDEN		1,764	1,764
HEARING OFFICER	2,500	2,500	2,500
FARMERS MARKET MANAGER	4,000	3,750	3,750
FARMERS MARKET ASST MANAGER		750	750
SEXTON/PER BURIAL	100.00		
SEXTON STIPEND		2,000	2,000
<u>RATES PER INSPECTION</u>			
ASST. BUILDING INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
GAS INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
PLUMBING INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
<u>HOURLY RATES</u>			
EXTRA CLERICAL	<u>Ranges/hr.</u> 15.00-18.75	<u>Ranges/hr.</u> 15.00-18.75	<u>Ranges/hr.</u> 15.00-18.75
ELECTION WORKERS	15.00-19.75	15.00-19.75	15.00-19.75
SUMMER HIGHWAY	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75
SNOWPLOW DRIVERS	15.00-27.00	15.00-27.00	15.00-27.00
PART TIME POLICE OFFICERS	29.00-35.00	29.00-37.00	29.00-37.00
PART TIME DISPATCHERS	22.00-27.00	22.00-27.00	22.00-27.00
PARKS & RECREATION	15.00-24.25	15.00-24.25	15.00-24.25
AIRPORT INTERN	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75

**SCHEDULE II
Appointed Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
SHIFT DIFFERENTIALS			
<u>PART TIME POLICE OFFICERS</u>			
SECOND SHIFT	1.00	1.00	1.00
THIRD SHIFT	1.25	1.25	1.25
<u>PART TIME DISPATCHERS</u>			
SECOND SHIFT	0.75	0.75	0.75
THIRD SHIFT	1.00	1.00	1.00
<u>PART TIME CLERICAL/LIBRARIES</u>	0.75	0.75	0.75

NON-UNION EMPLOYEES NOT SHOWN ABOVE (placed on FY25 NAGE Scale)

	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Range FY2025</u>		<u>Range FY2026</u>	
		Start	End	Start	End
<u>SALARIED</u>					
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	J	103,470	127,339	103,470	127,339
ASSISTANT TOWN ADMIN	I	94,064	115,764	94,064	115,764
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
TAX COLLECTOR/TREASURER	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
TOWN CLERK	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
CHIEF OF POLICE	I	94,064	115,764	94,064	115,764
DPW SUPERINTENDENT	H	85,514	105,239	85,514	105,239
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
LIBRARY DIRECTOR	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
CWF SUPERINTENDENT	H	85,514	105,239	85,514	105,239
<u>HOURLY</u>					
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	E	25.01	30.77	25.01	30.77
POLICE LIEUTENANT	G+8.5%	40.95	45.44	40.95	45.44
POLICE CUSTODIAN	A	16.76	20.62	16.76	20.62

Informational Only: Fiscal Year 2026 budgeted wages –

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	111,427	EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	30.77
ASSISTANT TOWN ADMIN	96,417	DPW SUPERINTENDENT	98,687
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	82,394	DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	75,746
TAX COLLECTOR/TREAS	82,394		
TOWN CLERK	77,260	LIBRARY DIRECTOR	82,394
CHIEF OF POLICE*	138,917	CWF SUPERINTENDENT	105,239
POLICE LIEUTENANT	45.44	POLICE CUSTODIAN	20.62

*includes additional 20% educational incentive pay

Background: This article appears regularly in the annual warrant. Changes for FY26:

1. The current scales and budgeted salaries do not include COLAs and only include step increases according to the FY25 NAGE scale. The FY26 NAGE scale is currently still in negotiations.
2. The Tree Warden was moved to the appointed scale starting FY26.
3. The Cemetery Sexton was changed from a per burial payment to a yearly stipend.
4. The Farmers Market Assistant Manager position was added and the stipend for the Farmers Market Manager was reduced to offset some of this addition.

Selectboard Recommends 2-0-1
Finance Committee Recommends 5-0-1

ARTICLE 4. Town Operating Budget (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$12,747,055 for the maintenance of the several departments of the Town, said sum to be allocated in accordance with Schedule III, Budget, and for any other necessary charges, with said sum to be raised from Taxation.

Schedule III
Town Operating Budget

DEPARTMENT	BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
TOWN MEETING	3,180	3,180	3,180
SELECTBOARD	326,230	324,662	324,662
FINANCE COMMITTEE	600	600	600
RESERVE FUND	50,000	50,000	50,000
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	93,000	101,374	101,374
ASSESSORS	186,059	180,122	180,122
TREASURER/COLLECTOR	206,965	208,335	208,335
TOWN COUNSEL	87,475	82,475	82,475
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	92,252	103,352	103,352
SHARED COSTS	93,499	104,930	104,930
TOWN CLERK	237,224	219,144	219,144
PLANNING	140,788	142,394	142,394
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS	700	700	700
PUBLIC BLDG UTILITIES	140,050	145,000	145,000
FARMERS MARKET	5,200	5,700	5,700
TOTAL GENERAL GOVT	1,663,222	1,671,968	1,671,968
PUBLIC SAFETY			
POLICE	2,067,608	2,069,965	2,069,965
POLICE CRUISER	60,000	-	-

Schedule III
Town Operating Budget

DEPARTMENT	BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SB/FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26
DISPATCH	410,768	410,868	410,868
BUILDING INSPECTOR	155,082	149,926	149,926
SEALER OF WEIGHTS	7,182	7,182	7,182
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	6,944	6,944	6,944
ANIMAL CONTROL	23,658	24,185	24,185
FOREST WARDEN	1,882	1,882	1,882
TREE WARDEN	30,474	30,474	30,474
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	2,763,598	2,701,426	2,701,426
PUBLIC WORKS			
DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS	1,772,006	1,810,284	1,810,284
SNOW & ICE	321,250	324,750	324,750
SOLID WASTE	802,776	835,300	835,300
CHARGING STATIONS	11,980	3,000	3,000
CEMETERIES	32,150	32,150	32,150
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	2,940,162	3,005,484	3,005,484
HUMAN SERVICES			
BOARD OF HEALTH	168,004	172,144	172,144
HUMAN SERVICES			
COUNCIL ON AGING	59,272	77,207	77,207
VETERANS' SERVICES	77,897	101,000	101,000
TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES	305,173	350,351	350,351
CULTURE & RECREATION			
LIBRARIES	518,233	521,033	521,033
PARKS & RECREATION	164,826	169,326	169,326
HISTORICAL COMMISSION	500	500	500
WAR MEMORIALS	1,600	1,600	1,600
TOTAL CULTURE/RECREATION	685,159	692,459	692,459
DEBT SERVICE	1,158,857	1,160,025	1,160,025
INTERGOVERNMENTAL	116,874	119,041	119,041
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	2,657,083	2,926,701	2,926,701
GENERAL INSURANCE	119,600	119,600	119,600
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	2,776,683	3,046,301	3,046,301
TOTAL TOWN BUDGET	12,409,728	12,747,055	12,747,055

Background: Schedule III includes the FY26 requests from all non-enterprise Town departments. All requests have been recommended. An original request for an Adult Services position in the library was not supported by the Selectboard for FY26 and the request was withdrawn. The Selectboard also withdrew their proposal to expand the Avenue A planter maintenance budget.

The Town Operating Budget request for FY26 is 2.72% higher than the previous year. Many of the increases are related to contractual increases and an 18% health insurance increase. The largest individual increase is in the Council on Aging and Veterans' Services budgets.

In the **General Government** category, the most notable changes are:

1. The Accounting office is planning a financial management software change with implementation starting July 1, 2025. The increase was offset by cutting book binding, office supplies, and longevity.
2. The Information Technology contract for FY26 services will increase by \$11,100. This is a planned contractual increase with the IT consultant.
3. The Town Clerk budget has decreased with next year being a one-election cycle for the department.
4. The Shared Costs budget includes a payroll software conversion starting January 1, 2026. The software will improve the payroll and human resources functions of the Town.

In the **Public Safety** category, the only personnel increases are contractual steps based on the FY25 contracts. The police department has removed the cruiser purchase for FY26. The police department also increased the academy expense line by \$17,000 (100%), due to the new rates of the academy and the plan to put two new officers through the academy in FY26.

In **Public Works**, the largest cost increase is the contract increases for trash/recycling pickup. Those lines increased by \$32,250 (27.8%). This increase comes from year 2 of a contract with Casella who the Town changed to in FY2025 in hopes to provide better services for the citizens. The other significant increase is for street line painting which is a contractual increase from a Franklin Regional Council of Governments bid.

In **Human Services**, the largest increase is in the Council on Aging with the addition of an Administrative Assistant position, which resulted in a salary line increase of \$18,962 (40.73%). The Veterans' Services budget also had a large increase (\$23,103 or 32.36%) stemming from a request from Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services Department following changes in legislation from the HERO Act.

Wages & Benefits – Currently there are no COLAs built into the budget with all union contracts expiring the end of this fiscal year. There is also an 18-20% (depending on

which plan) increase in health insurance rates from the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust for FY26 which resulted in a budget increase of \$243,000.

Comment: The Finance Committee’s abstention was based on the member being recently appointed to the Finance Committee, so they were not part of the beginning budget process.

Selectboard Recommends 2-0-1
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0-1

ARTICLE 5. Clean Water Facility Budget (Sewer Commissioners Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,221,303 for the purpose of operating the Clean Water Facility and associated pumping stations, said sum to be allocated in accordance with Schedule IV, CWF Budget, with \$406,188 to be raised from Taxation and \$2,815,115 to be raised from Sewer Revenue.

Schedule IV Clean Water Facility Budget			
DEPARTMENT	BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26
CLEAN WATER FACILITY			
Wages & Expenses	2,116,590	2,209,442	2,209,442
Capital Outlay	58,500	58,500	58,500
Debt Service	478,365	485,028	485,028
Employee Benefits	380,719	383,183	383,183
SUBTOTAL CWF	3,034,174	3,136,153	3,136,153
DPW SUBSIDIARY			
Wages & Expenses	85,150	85,150	85,150
SUBTOTAL DPW SUBSIDIARY	85,150	85,150	85,150
TOTAL CWF	3,119,324	3,221,303	3,221,303

Background: The largest individual increase was \$41,561 for overage charges payable to Erving for treating Millers Falls flow. This provides the actual overage charge due in FY26 for the excess flow treated in FY24. The overage charge is primarily due to excessive inflow and infiltration. This issue is being aggressively pursued now that the DPW has a Collection System Lead Operator. Some areas of major inflow and infiltration have already been identified and corrected, and others are currently being investigated. Another increase was to the water expense line, which is due to a new meter being installed in August of 2024.

Comment: The Finance Committee’s abstention was based on the member being recently appointed to the Finance Committee, so they were not part of the beginning budget process.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
 Finance Committee Recommends 6-0-1

ARTICLE 6. Airport Budget (Airport Commission Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$425,732 for the purpose of operating the Turners Falls Airport, said sum to be allocated in accordance with Schedule V, Airport Budget, with \$23,372 to be raised from Town Sale of Real Estate, \$99,396 to be raised from Taxation, and \$302,964 to be raised from Airport Revenue.

DEPARTMENT	Schedule V Airport Budget		SELECTBOARD
	BUDGET	REQUEST	FIN COMM
	FY25	FY26	RECOMMEND FY26
AIRPORT			
Wages & Expenses	255,238	271,625	271,625
Capital Outlay/Local Share	-	-	-
Debt Service	102,775	99,935	99,935
Employee Benefits	61,664	54,172	54,172
TOTAL AIRPORT	419,677	425,732	425,732

Background: As has been discussed at the previous Special Town Meeting (STM) and Annual Town Meeting (ATM), there is a major revenue shortfall due to the delay in implementation of the solar project. Much like we did at the STM in FY24 and the ATM for FY25, this revenue shortfall will be funded by both Town Sale of Real Estate, which covers the Pioneer Debt Service not already funded by a FAA grant, and Taxation.

Comment: One of the Finance Committee abstentions was based on the member being recently appointed to the Finance Committee, so they were not part of the beginning budget process.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
 Finance Committee Recommends 4-0-2

ARTICLE 7. Airport Fuel Revolving Fund (Airport Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to amend Article II of the Town of Montague General Bylaws, pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E¹/₂, to add a new Section 7, Revolving Funds as shown below, and to establish a spending limit of \$200,000

for the Airport Fuel revolving fund for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025, which spending limit to be applicable for each fiscal year until such time as Town Meeting votes, prior to July 1 for the ensuing fiscal year, to increase the same.

Section 7: Revolving Funds

(a) There are hereby established in the Town of Montague, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.44, §53E½, the following Revolving Funds:

Revolving Fund	Spending Authority	Revenue Source	Allowed Expenses
Airport Fuel	Airport Commission	Fees from sale of Airport fuel	Purchase of Airport fuel to be sold and used at the Airport

(b) Expenditures from each revolving fund set forth herein shall be subject to the spending limits established by Town Meeting or any increase therein as may be authorized in accordance with MGL c. 44, § 53E 1/2.

Background: The cost of fuel has increased since the establishment of this revolving fund even though the usage has not increased. Therefore, this increase is just to accommodate the increase in fuel costs since FY2022 when this was established. Use of airport fuel tends to fluctuate, and the fuel tank is replenished as needed rather than on a certain schedule. Funds are deposited as aviation fuel is purchased by airport users, and tank refills are paid for directly from those revenues. This article adds no additional cost to the Town or the taxpayer.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0

ARTICLE 8. Colle Budget (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$52,250 for the purpose of funding the operations and maintenance of the Colle Building, said sum to be raised from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation.

Background: This budget is wholly funded by building lease fees, which are segregated to pay for all the normal building maintenance including some utilities and general repairs. The debt service from the renovation was paid off in FY23. Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriations has a current balance of \$242,808.

Comment: The Finance Committee’s abstention was based on the member being recently appointed to the Finance Committee, so they were not part of the beginning budget process.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0-1

ARTICLE 9. FCTS Assessment (Franklin County Technical School Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$841,660 for the purpose of paying the Franklin County Technical School District for Montague’s share of the assessment for the yearly operation of the Franklin County Technical School, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

Background: Montague is one of 19 member towns in the Franklin County Technical School District, which operates a school in the Airport Industrial Park. The FY2026 assessment increased \$4,304 (0.5%). Montague’s enrollment also dropped by one student from FY2025 following the drop of 19 students in FY2024.

Comment 1: The Finance Committee has an internal policy to cushion sharp changes to the assessment. It provides additions or reductions to the FCTS Stabilization Fund to stabilize the assessment’s impact on the budget. Normally the Finance Committee would recommend that \$75,990 be added to the FCTS Stabilization Fund to help smooth out future assessment increases but has chosen to forgo that this year due to the current balance of \$303,747 in that fund.

Comment 2: The Finance Committee’s abstention was based on the member being recently appointed to the Finance Committee, so they were not part of the beginning budget process.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0-1

ARTICLE 10. GMRSD Assessment (Gill-Montague Regional School District Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$12,663,178 for the purpose of paying the Gill-Montague Regional School District for Montague’s share of the assessment for the yearly operation of the Gill-Montague Regional Schools, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

Background: The GMRSD has provided additional information in a separate document in your packet. Montague’s assessment increased by \$519,736 or 4.28% and is the Affordable Assessment amount provided to them by Montague. The Affordable Assessment amount is based on an agreement (the “Compact for Funding Education”) to keep the local assessment “affordable,” which was forged between the district and its two sending towns over a decade ago. The Affordable Assessment is calculated as 48.5% of Montague’s available operating revenues, plus excluded debt for GMRSD capital projects.

This assessment funds the operation of five schools serving students from pre-school to 12th grade, as well as tuition, special education services, and school choice payments for some of the Montague resident students who are not enrolled at GMRSD schools.

The total GMRSD budget for FY26 is \$28,822,940. The combined assessments to member towns comprise (\$14,657,730) 50.9% of the district's total operating revenue. The remainder comes from state aid and reimbursements, grants, school choice payments from sending districts, etc.

Comment 1: The GMRSD has again managed to build a budget around an "affordable" figure provided to them by Montague, but not without cuts to their services. By approving this request, Town Meeting upholds its commitment to offer the district a significant, predetermined portion of Town revenue, while reserving the rest for other uses.

Comment 2: The Finance Committee's abstention was based on the member being recently appointed to the Finance Committee, so they were not part of the beginning budget process.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0-1

ARTICLE 11. Smith Vocational and Agricultural (Town Accountant Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$59,000 for the purpose of providing tuition and transportation for a Montague resident attending Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

Background: A Montague resident will be attending Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. Since the student's program is not offered at FCTS, the Town is obligated to pay the tuition and transportation costs to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. The current estimate of tuition for FY26 is \$23,000, with the remaining appropriation available to pay for transportation. This will cover the student's sophomore year.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0

ARTICLE 12. NAGE and UE Contract (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$125,154 for the purpose of funding the implementation of a collective bargaining agreement with United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 274 and National Association of Government Employees for Fiscal Year 2026, with \$98,262 to be raised from Taxation and \$26,262 to be raised from Sewer Revenue.

Background: Approval of this appropriation is needed to settle the collective bargaining agreement with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 274 (which covers about 21 employees in our public works and clean water facilities) and the National Association of Government Employees (which covers 35 employees not in police or public works unions). The approved agreement would be for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028. The new agreement includes a shift to the new wage chart as proposed by the Collins Center Wage and Class Study for FY2026 and then

COLAs for FY2027 and FY2028. Once approved, payments would be made to employees upon signature of contract retroactive to July 1, 2025, or beginning July 1, 2025, if contract is signed before beginning of fiscal year.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 5-0

ARTICLE 13. Library Accessibility/Upgrades (Library Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$10,000 for the purpose of funding accessibility repairs and upgrades for the Montague Public Libraries, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

Background: As part of a Libraries Transforming Communities grant, the Montague Public Libraries developed a five-year Accessibility Plan. The facilities portion of the plan calls for the implementation of most of the recommendations made by the town's 2018 ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for the town's three libraries. These recommendations have been broken down by the fiscal year. FY26 upgrades will focus on implementing American Disability Act (ADA)-compliant indoor and outdoor signage at all three library locations, handrail repair and upgraded door handles at the Carnegie Library, a designated ADA parking space and grab bar installation at the Millers Falls Branch Library, and repair of the wheelchair ramp and various handrails at the Montague Center Branch Library.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0

ARTICLE 14. CWF Mini Excavator, Generators, Thickened Sludge Pumps (Clean Water Facility Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$231,800 for the purpose of the following CWF projects and any and all incidental and related costs, with said sum to be raised from CWF Retained Earnings.

1. \$60,000 to purchase a used mini excavator.
2. \$67,800 to replace the Lake Pleasant generator and the purchase of a portable emergency generator.
3. \$104,000 to replace two thickened sludge pumps.

Mini Excavator Background: The CWF performs many on-site and off-site routine updates and special projects requiring the use of an excavator. The facility is also responsible for managing its own groundskeeping, excavating, and lifting work when necessary. The CWF has borrowed other municipal excavators and spent over \$25,000 on the rental of a small excavator to perform site work on multiple projects for calendar year 2024 and would rather invest that money in the future into purchasing a used excavator to have on site consistently.

NOTE: The facility is not looking to purchase a brand-new excavator, as a used/low hour machine will suffice for the required applications.

Generators Background: As part of the planned continuation of the nine (9) pump station generator replacements, this generator serves the Lake Pleasant Rd pump station in Lake Pleasant and is circa 1981. The current generator at this station was originally a portable generator that was made semi-permanent due to a previously failed stationary generator.

An inspection performed by the service technician, PowerGen Technologies LLC, has recommended replacement as parts on the 1981 generators have become obsolete and cannot be replaced if the generators fail. DEP/MGL also requires operable and serviceable generators at all wastewater pumping stations to prevent a backup and discharge of untreated sewage during power outages.

Additionally, the current back-up portable generator is circa 1981 and is overdue for replacement. The portable generator is a redundant back-up power supply to any out-of-service stationary generators located at any of the eight (8) pump stations.

Thickened Sludge Pump Background: The CWF has historically utilized three (3) thickened sludge pumps to pump sludge from the gravity thickener and two (2) sludge holding tanks to feed liquid sludge to the press for dewatering, and/or feed liquid sludge to a 9,000-gallon tanker for disposal. Since the loss of the local papermills, the facility no longer needs to utilize all three (3) pumps, needing only the use of two (2). (Redundancy is required as per MGL)

The old pumps are piston style pumps circa 1981 (drives from 2010) and are an outdated and extremely dangerous pump style, having exterior rotating parts which pose a safety risk to staff. This concern was mentioned in a February 2024 Dept of Labor Standards/OSHA inspection. This old-style pump also requires a higher level of maintenance compared to several other pump styles due to its worn parts. The typical life expectancy of a piston pump is 10-20 years, depending on how well it has been maintained and how many hours in operation.

The update will replace two (2) of the pumps with an appropriate pump style, replace some of the deteriorated piping on both the inlet and discharge sides of the pump with stainless steel, and update controls. CWF staff will procure the equipment and perform the demolition and installation of the pumps in-house. The third pump will be completely removed from service and disposed of as per Town Policy/MGL.

If the pumps are not replaced, they face imminent failure, which would prevent the facility from removing sludge/solids, which will in turn cause a significant non-compliance with permitted solids removal requirements with EPA/MA DEP.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 7-0
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 4-0

ARTICLE 15. Phase 2 Sewer Collection System Rehabilitation (DPW/Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,000,000 for the purpose of rehabilitating sewer manholes and sewer pipes to address structural defects and potential sources of inflow and infiltration to the Town's sewer collection system, including but not limited to engineering, bidding, and construction, as well as all other costs incidental and related thereto, and to meet this appropriation to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, to borrow said sum under General Laws Chapter 44, Sections 7 and 8, and/or Chapter 29C, or any other lawful enabling authority and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor; that the Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard is authorized to borrow all or a portion of such amount from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust established pursuant to Chapter 29C and in connection therewith to enter into a financing agreement and/or security agreement with the Trust and otherwise to contract with the Trust and the Department of Environmental Protection with respect to such loan and for any federal or state aid available for the project or for the financing thereof; and that the Selectboard, the Public Works Superintendent, or other appropriate local body or official is authorized to enter into a project regulatory agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection, to expend all funds available for the project and to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out the project; while the entire borrowing will be issued as a general obligation of the Town payable from all sources of revenues, it is anticipated that the principal and interest due on a \$1,200,000 portion of the principal amount of such borrowing shall be repaid in the first instance through sewer user fees; and further to authorize the Selectboard to execute any other documents and/or agreements necessary to effectuate the purposes of this vote.

Background: The Town's combined sewer overflow (CSO) update to its Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP), included contracting with Wright-Pierce (an engineering firm) to develop short and long-term implementation plans for improving the maintenance, operation, and condition of its wastewater collection system. Completing the work within a 10-year period is a condition of the Town's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Implementing this rehabilitation is the Town's legal obligation.

Phase 1 was funded by a \$500,000 grant from a Rural /Small Town Development grant and will be completed in the spring of 2025. This Article will continue the Phase 1 effort, which addresses Priorities 1 and 2 of the plan, which are the most in need of completion. Phase 1 included rehabilitation of 53 manholes. Phase 2 will include rehabilitation of 37 pipes (totaling 9,459 linear feet) and 74 manholes in Turners Falls and Millers Falls. This will be funded by the issue of \$3 million of long-term non-excluded debt.

As stated in the article, this project will be funded with debt. Currently the Town debt ratio for non-excluded debt is 0.15%, which is far below the 5% goal established in the financial policies. A fiscal goal of the Town has been to increase this number to help illustrate the community's ability to maintain infrastructure and capital assets within its

regular revenues. The split is proposed to be 60%/40% between the General Fund and the Sewer Enterprise Fund because those are proportions of work that are on the combined sewer/stormwater (CSO) system compared to the separated sewer system.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-1
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 4-0

ARTICLE 16. DPW 10-Wheel Dump Truck (Department of Public Works Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$365,000 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a ten-wheel dump truck, including plow, sander, and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

Background: Purchase will replace an aging 2003 International 7400 with wing plow and spreader. The truck has undergone significant repairs including replacement of the dump body in 2017. This replacement request follows the capital improvement plan, which recommends a 20-year replacement cycle for large dump trucks. The truck will be used year-round for highway maintenance including clearing winter roads and hauling construction materials to and from job sites.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-1
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 4-0

ARTICLE 17. DPW Dump Truck (Department of Public Works Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$325,000 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a dump truck, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Town Capital Stabilization.

Background: Purchase will replace an aging 2002 International 4900 with spreader. This replacement request follows the capital improvement plan, which recommends a 20-year replacement cycle for large dump trucks. The truck will be used year-round for highway maintenance including clearing winter roads and hauling construction materials to and from job sites.

Selectboard Recommends 2-1
Finance Committee Recommends 5-0
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 4-0

ARTICLE 18. DPW: Camera Van and Pickup Truck (Department of Public Works Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$135,000 for the following Department of Public Works vehicles, including all equipment and any and all incidental and related costs, with said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

1. \$70,000 to purchase and equip a camera van.
2. \$65,000 to purchase and equip a pickup truck.

Camera Van Background: Purchase will replace a 2001 Ford E450 (retired ambulance). This replacement request follows the capital improvement plan, which recommends a 12-year replacement cycle for most vehicles. The Van is used for transportation to and from sewer collection infrastructure around town with CCTV equipment used to inspect the system for condition reports.

Pickup Truck Background: Purchase will replace an aging 2007 F-150 pickup. This replacement request follows the capital improvement plan, which recommends a 12-year replacement cycle for most vehicles. The truck will be used for transportation to and from town buildings with cleaning supplies and equipment. Will also assist with moving of furniture and goods. The Town also intends to apply for partial grant funding to replace this truck with an electric vehicle.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 4-0

ARTICLE 19. DPW: Oakman Street Slope, Non-Chapter 90 Paving (Department of Public Works Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$90,000 for the purpose of the following Department of Public Works projects and any and all incidental and related costs, with said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

1. \$60,000 to complete the Oakman Street slope stabilization.
2. \$30,000 for the paving of alleys and non-chapter 90 eligible roadways.

Oakman Street Slope Background: An area of slope below storm drainage near the intersection of Oakman Street and Highland Circle has begun to wash out significantly, with considerable downhill erosion.

The road is at risk of failure, and if delayed, the road could be forced to close. The Town intends to hire an engineer for the design phase, while DPW staff will conduct the anticipated repairs in-house during the construction phase. These efforts will stabilize the road by reducing the amount of sediment loss to downhill waterways.

Non-Chapter 90 Paving Background: Funding is needed to support in-house paving of various alleys and other rights-of-way not included in the state's Chapter 90 program. Purchases will be made and the work overseen by DPW staff.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 7-0
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0

ARTICLE 20. DPW Meadow Road Guardrails (Department of Public Works Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$200,000 for the purpose of replacing guardrails on Meadow Road and any and all incidental and related costs, with said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

Background: Replacement or improvements are needed to several areas of guardrail along Meadow Road. Currently, several of the wooden posts supporting the guardrails are rotten, broken, or missing, and height is also inconsistent. This presents a safety risk for motorists, as the current guardrail would fail to prevent a vehicle from falling into the Connecticut River below.

This project would be contracted out to a guardrail installer through a procurement conducted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). Project management would be conducted by DPW staff.

Selectboard Recommends 2-1
Finance Committee Recommends 7-0
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0

ARTICLE 21. DPW Equipment Account (Department of Public Works Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$36,470 for the purpose of purchasing, equipping, and making major repairs to DPW vehicles and equipment, including all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

Background: This fund provides available year-round funding for the Department of Public Works (DPW) superintendent to purchase and/or make major repairs to DPW vehicles and equipment. Expenditures from this fund are governed by a policy adopted in 2022. That policy requires Selectboard approval for any expenditure exceeding \$25,000. The policy also indicates that the fund should be replenished at the Annual Town Meeting to a total of \$100,000 for the coming fiscal year, based on the amount in the fund as of March 1. This year the Selectboard cut this policy to \$75,000 for the coming fiscal year.

Based on a balance of \$38,530 in the DPW discretionary account as of March 1, this appropriation is expected to return the total DPW discretionary fund balance to approximately \$75,000.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-1
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0

ARTICLE 22. Millers Falls Library Storefront, Unity Park Upgrades, Montague Center Complete Streets Design (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$255,200 for the purpose of the following Town projects, including all incidental and related costs, with said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

1. \$39,000 for repairs/renovation to Millers Falls library storefront.
2. \$125,000 for upgrades to Unity Park.
3. \$91,200 for design costs for Montague Center Complete Streets project.

Millers Falls Library Background: Though new HVAC was installed, and both the windows and back door of the Millers Falls Branch Library were replaced, one item reducing the building's energy efficiency is the glass storefront on the front of the building. The storefront leaks cold air in the summer and hot air in the winter. The glass makes the immediate area around it quite hot from the spring through early fall and creates an uncomfortable "fishbowl" effect for library staff and patrons. Additionally, the front door regularly lets in water during heavy rains, which has led to interior floor damage. The current door is not ADA accessible.

It is the intention of this project to replace the storefront with a regular building façade, incorporating large, but standard-sized windows in keeping with the aesthetic of the neighborhood and an ADA compliant automatic front door.

Unity Park Upgrades Background: This project will include the replacement of the rubber, poured-in-place (PIP) surfacing as well as the tube slide in the Unity Park playground. The current PIP surface is beyond its useful life and has been cracking and pulling up in numerous areas due to high traffic. There is approximately 2,500 sq. feet of PIP surfacing that must be replaced. A new tube slide will replace the current one that was purchased and installed in 2000 and is also beyond its useful life.

Unity Park is one of the most popular recreational areas in Franklin County. The playground receives constant patronage, which speaks to the importance of committing to routine maintenance. The life of rubber pour-in-place surfacing is approximately ten years, and the current PIP surface is original to Phase 1 of the Unity Park Improvement Project from 2012, so it is slightly beyond its useful life. The replacement of this surface is not only critical to the safety of park patrons but also maintains ADA regulations relative to public play spaces. Attempts have been made in recent years to patch torn areas, but these efforts have resulted in less than acceptable results.

The current blue tube slide is one of the most popular items in the playground area and was installed in 2000. The useful life of playground equipment is approximately fifteen years. The Parks & Recreation Department has started to invest more time, energy and resources into maintaining the slide in recent years and recommends the replacement of this item to ensure safety.

Montague Center Complete Streets Background: The Town applied for and was awarded the sum of \$499,682.80 from MassDOT's Complete Streets program to support three improvements in Montague Center. These include North Street/Main Street/Town Common improvements, bicycle accommodation on Main Street, and improvements at the FRTA bus stop on Main Street in Montague Center. While the grant is eligible to fund construction phase services, including administration and oversight, other necessary expenses must come from other sources.

The Town has received a quote to provide the additional services that are necessary for the projects to move forward. Items that require funding include Final Design (\$74,400), Project Specifications (\$6,400), and Bid Documents and Bid Tabs (\$10,400), totaling \$91,200.

The substantial award from MassDOT for these three projects in Montague Center presents a rare opportunity to leverage outside resources for improving vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety in the village center. Allowing these projects to advance presents significant cost savings as compared to the Town relying on its own capital funds to cover nearly \$500,000 worth of construction costs on these essential improvements. This area has been the subject of several discussions related to local traffic safety in recent years, with community input identifying traffic calming and bike/pedestrian safety improvements in this neighborhood as top priorities.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

Finance Committee Recommends 7-0

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0

ARTICLE 23. FRTA Bus Stop Improvements (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$60,000 for the purpose of Franklin Regional Transportation Authority (FRTA) bus stop improvements at Industrial Boulevard and Millers Falls Road, including all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Cannabis Impact Fee Stabilization.

Background: This article would allow the town to partner with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) to improve pedestrian, transit, and traffic safety at the intersection of Industrial Blvd and Millers Falls Road. FRTA was awarded a grant from MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces program in the amount of \$178,376 to fund improvements to the two bus stops on either side of Millers Falls Road at the intersection with Industrial Boulevard with a safe pedestrian crossing.

The FRTA has approached the Town and other stakeholder organizations, such as the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA), to request assistance with funding a shortfall between the project budget and the expected construction cost. If the FRTA is unable to secure sufficient additional funds to support the project, there is a risk that the grant funds would need to be surrendered, and the project would not move forward. The project as designed would improve safety for all

users at a bus stop location served by two bus routes (23, 32), at an intersection which becomes quite busy during peak hours.

The work is to be funded from Cannabis Impact Fees which are limited to expenses directly connected to the impacts of the cannabis industry on Montague. This is an eligible expense because of the project's proximity and relation to the town's only cannabis retail facility. The current balance of that account is \$235,307.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 7-0
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0

ARTICLE 24. Keith Footbridge (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$67,900 for the purpose of abating and removing utilities from the Keith footbridge over canal, including all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Canal District Utility Improvement Stabilization.

Background: As part of the planned demolition project of the former Strathmore Mill site at 20 Canal Road, the Keith footbridge will need to be removed. This is the bridge that spans the power canal over the bike path near Keith Apartments. Removal is planned for Summer 2025.

The footbridge is owned by FirstLight Hydro Generating Co., who have agreed to fund and procure construction services for its removal. However, the Town is responsible for mitigating hazardous materials on the Town-owned utility lines which are located on this bridge. The requested funds are necessary for engineering and abatement associated with removing asbestos-containing materials from the Town's utility lines on the footbridge. After the removal of hazardous materials, DPW staff will cut and cap the utility lines, after which the bridge will be ready for removal by FirstLight's contractors. The work is to be funded from the Canal District Stabilization Fund (Current balance \$260,316) which was set up by Town meeting as part of a settlement agreement with FirstLight surrounding the terms of the removal of this footbridge. The use of the funds is limited to work associated with improving infrastructure and access to the Canal District.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0

ARTICLE 25. Transfers to Reserves (Finance Committee Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the following sums for the purpose of increasing the special purpose funds set forth below, said sums to be raised from Taxation and Free Cash.

Fund	Amount (\$)	Funding Source
Henry Waidlich Conservation Trust Fund	\$10,000	Taxation
Town Capital Stabilization Fund	\$231,890	Taxation, \$131,890 Free Cash, \$100,000
GMRSD Stabilization Fund	\$88,718	Taxation, \$38,718 Free Cash, \$50,000
OPEB Trust Fund	\$100,000	Taxation, \$50,000 Free Cash, \$50,000
Total:	\$430,608	

Background: These are annual transfers to reserves from taxation per our financial policies. This year we added the transfer to the Henry Waidlich Conservation Trust Fund to streamline the warrant.

- The Conservation Commission is requesting to supplement the existing balance of \$37,788 in the Henry Waidlich Conservation Fund with an additional \$10,000. The fund is used to leverage the protection of priority farmland and other open space as identified in the current Open Space and Recreation Plan.
 - Town Meeting has supported the Henry Waidlich Conservation Trust Fund for over 40 years. The fund is dedicated to the purpose of protecting important land and resources in Montague. It is stewarded by the Conservation Commission. Expenditures from this fund have helped protect over 500 acres of the Town’s most important agricultural properties from development since 1989. Since 2000, the Town has leveraged \$16 of funding from outside sources for every dollar contributed by the Henry Waidlich Conservation Fund.
 - The fund was last used in 2020 to purchase an Agriculture Preservation Restriction on 36 acres of prime farmland off Old Greenfield Road. In that instance the fund’s investment of \$32,500 leveraged \$392,500 from the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture and Franklin Land Trust to protect high priority farmland with an iconic tobacco barn.
 - The availability of these funds allows the Conservation Commission to be nimble and responsive to sometime rapidly moving real-estate opportunities. The fund accepts donations and bequests.

- The **Town General Stabilization Fund** is intended to be used only in times of drastic revenue shortfalls. The policy is to have an annual appropriation of 0.3% of the prior year’s general operating revenue (PYGOR), but also to keep a minimum balance of 5% of PYGOR. While .03% of PYGOR is \$74,496, the current

balance is above the minimum, so no appropriation is required this year. The current balance as of March 31st was \$1,337,433.

- The **Town Capital Stabilization Fund**, while still funded from taxation, has a slightly more complicated calculation. We start with 0.2% of PYGOR (\$49,664) as the base amount. Then we add part of the Kearsarge lease payment. The total lease payment is first evenly split between capital and operating. The operating half is included in the available revenues for the Affordable Assessment, but the Town percentage of that (51.5% or \$41,113) is allocated to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund. The capital half is split by the same allocation, with 51.5% (\$41,113) going to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund and 48.5% (\$38,718) going to the GMRSD Stabilization Fund. The total appropriation to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund is therefore $\$49,664 + \$41,113 + \$41,113 = \$131,890$. This fund is used for capital projects. The balance as of March 31st was \$2,586,368.
- The **GMRSD Stabilization Fund** is funded by a portion of the annual Kearsarge Lease payment as described above. This fund is used for capital items for the GMRSD, and the balance as of March 31st was \$169,655.
- The **FCTS Stabilization Fund** is used to smooth out large fluctuations in the annual assessment due to large changes in enrollment. An expected assessment is calculated based on a three-year (FY23-FY25) average student enrollment multiplied by the current year (FY25) per-pupil cost. If the actual assessment is larger than that by more than \$10,000, the difference is funded from this fund. If the actual assessment is lower than the estimated assessment by more than \$10,000, the “savings” is put here to fund future increases. This was not done this year due to the current balance of \$303,747.
- The practice in recent years has been to add \$50,000 of taxation to the Other Post Employment Benefits (**OPEB**) **Trust Fund**. This fund was established to begin funding for the future health insurance cost of current employees after they retire. Funding this liability is not currently required, but it is a prudent thing to do. This appropriation of funds into the OPEB Trust is viewed both as mostly symbolic gestures showing that Montague recognizes its obligation (appreciated by bond rating agencies) and is beginning to address it, although the amount is well below what would be needed if we were actively funding the liability.

The Town’s long-term plan is to address the OPEB unfunded liability more aggressively after the Town’s unfunded pension liability has been “fully funded” (currently expected to occur in FY33). At that time the money currently appropriated to fund the unfunded pension liability will be available for use, on an annual basis, to more rigorously fund the unfunded OPEB liability, although there may not be a formal funding schedule in place. However, even that will probably not be enough to meet the annual OPEB funding needs.

The balance in this as of March 31st was \$2,361,339. The current unfunded liability is \$9,417,000.

- Montague's financial policies (A-5 Reserves) suggest that amounts of Free Cash above a certain threshold should be put into town stabilization funds or the OPEB Trust Fund. The Finance Committee discussed options of what to do with the remaining free cash from this fiscal year. The result was to mirror how the Kearsarge lease payments are handled with a percentage going to the Gill Montague Regional Stabilization Fund and a larger percentage going to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund. The Finance Committee also wanted to put some money towards the OPEB Trust Fund but knowing that this liability is longer term than the pressing short-term capital needs the Town and School will be facing.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0

ARTICLE 26. FirstLight Hydro Generating Co. PILOT (Selectboard + Assessors Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to authorize the Selectboard and the Board of Assessors to negotiate, enter into and approve a Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement known as a "PILOT" or "Tax Agreement" pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59 Section 38H(b), or any other enabling authority, between the Town of Montague and FirstLight Hydro Generating Co., its successors, assignees or affiliates, on such terms and conditions and for such period of time as negotiated by the Selectboard and the Board of Assessors, for payment in lieu of taxes related to personal and/or real property associated with an electric generation facility, all as set forth in said PILOT; and further to authorize the Selectboard and the Board of Assessors to take such action as may be necessary to carry out the vote taken hereunder.

Background: This article would allow the Town to lock in a mutually agreed upon valuation of Firstlight personal and real property assets for a fixed period of time of instead of assessing the company annually. Firstlight owns the Cabot generating plant, power canal, and dam and is one of the largest taxpayers in Town. The Town and Firstlight are currently attempting to settle contested personal and real property valuations from FY 22, 23, and 24. In FY22, the difference between the Town and FirstLight's expert valuations of the assets is \$129M and \$45M, respectively. This represents up to \$9M in potential liability exposure, which dwarfs the \$1M currently held in overlay. The Town was successful in court against Firstlight in 2019, however that same result should not be expected this time around. The Assessors and Selectboard feel that a PILOT agreement as a component of settling the contested valuations would be a more advantageous option to the town instead of the current pattern perpetual litigation over past valuations. Ultimately a PILOT would put the Town in control of FirstLight's assessment- not the Appellate Tax Board. In uncertain times, a PILOT would provide the benefit of predictability and consistency for a core revenue source for the Town. Failure to pass this article will effectively direct the town to

continue to litigate the FY22-24 abatements through the Appellate Tax Board where FirstLight is seeking over \$9M.

Pros of Authorizing a PILOT

- Avoids over \$9M in exposure for FY22-24 abatements including an 8% interest charge for abatements granted by Appellate Tax Board
- Finds a middle ground valuation that is closer to the Town's value than to FirstLight's opinion of valuation
- Avoided need for revaluation appraisals every 5 years in FY27 and FY32 (\$35K each)
- Avoided cost of litigating contested valuations at Appellate Tax Board (\$300K)
- Carrying less overlay will reduce the tax rate. Overlay is currently held at \$1M, but can be held around \$120K with a PILOT
- Town revenues would have predictability and control and less exposure to volatility of the energy markets and decisions by the quasi-judicial Appellate Tax Board.
- Will allow Town and FirstLight to build a solid partnership by not being in constant state of litigation over valuation.

Cons of authorizing a PILOT

- A reduced valuation will affect the tax rates for the length of the PILOT. For example, a PILOT assessment that is 25% of the town's valuation would reduce town revenues by approximately \$900,000 per year.
- PILOTS may have an escalator for the assessment that incrementally increases revenues, however they are fairly rigid:
 - Foregone opportunity to assess new improvements to FirstLight assets during the length of the PILOT
 - Increases in taxation (ex. new building projects or overrides) will not impact PILOT rates.

Selectboard Recommends 2-1

Assessors Recommends 3-0

ARTICLE 27. Property Tax Threshold (Board of Assessors Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 54 to modify and increase the threshold from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for personal property accounts subject to taxation for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2025.

Background: Approval of this article would increase the threshold that had been established at Town Meeting in 2007. Increasing the threshold to \$10,000 is the maximum amount allowed by the statute and would affect approximately 80 personal property accounts. If passed, these accounts would no longer receive a tax bill for taxable items. The estimated loss of taxes is \$2,533.00, accounting for the cost associated with valuing each account. Increasing the threshold would benefit small businesses who would not receive a tax bill unless they have taxable items with a value over \$10,000.00.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

ARTICLE 28. Tax Title Payment Agreements (Treasurer Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to amend the Town’s General Bylaws to add a new Section 14B to Article III under Treasurer/Collector, as set forth below entitled “Tax Title Payment Plans”, to authorize the Treasurer-Collector to pursue and establish payment agreements for parcels of land in tax title so as to allow delinquent taxpayers to pay off their tax liens over time, as authorized by M.G.L. c. 60 § 62A, as amended by sections 89-91 of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024:

Section 14B: Tax Title Payment Plans

- A. Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. c. 60, § 62A, the Town Treasurer-Collector shall have the authority to enter into written payment agreements with any person entitled to redeem ownership of parcels in tax title which have been taken by the Town as a result of nonpayment of real estate taxes. The payment agreement shall be executed on such terms and conditions for payment of the delinquent taxes, interest and any other costs, fees or charges associated with same, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 60, § 62A and this bylaw. The Treasurer-Collector shall not refuse to enter into agreements with eligible taxpayers.

- B. This bylaw shall apply to all taxpayers with parcels in the following assessment categories of tax title in the Town:
 - 1. Commercial property;
 - 2. Residential property;
 - 3. Industrial; and
 - 4. Open space.

- C. The following conditions must be met prior to the Town entering into a payment agreement:
 - 1. The Town has not filed a petition to foreclose the rights of redemption with the Land Court, and the recording date of the Instrument of Taking recorded in the Franklin County Registry of Deeds must be no more than ten (10) years from the date of the proposed agreement; and
 - 2. All real estate taxes and water/sewer user fees due for the current fiscal year assessed against the parcel must be paid to date.

- D. All payment agreements shall comply with the following minimum requirements:
 - 1. The payment agreement shall be for a term of five (5) years; provided, however, that nothing herein shall preclude the taxpayer from completing payments of the amount owed within a shorter period of time;

2. The payment agreement shall include a waiver of fifty percent (50%) of the interest that has accrued in the tax title account, but only if the taxpayer fully complies with the terms of the agreement (no taxes or collection costs may be waived); and
 3. The payment agreement shall state the amount of the payment due from the taxpayer at the time of execution of the agreement, which shall be ten percent (10%) of the amount needed to redeem the parcel at the inception of the agreement. The taxpayer must then agree to pay the remaining balance due to the Town in equal monthly installments.
- E. During the term of the agreement, the Treasurer-Collector may not bring an action to foreclose the tax title unless payments are not made in accordance with the schedule set out in the payment agreement or timely payments are not made on other amounts due to the Town that constitutes a lien on the same parcel.
- F. Nothing in this bylaw shall preempt or preclude the authority of the Treasurer-Collector to accept partial payments or to negotiate and enter into payment agreements authorized by M.G.L. c. 60, §§ 22 and § 22A, or any other statutory authority.

Background: This article will provide the Treasurer/ Tax Collector with important and lawful guideposts when negotiating tax title agreements, based on new laws effective November 2024. Massachusetts law governs tax title procedures for cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth. A tax title is a lien placed on property to enforce the collection of property taxes, and is removed when the property tax account is paid in full. In November of 2024 a legislative fix was passed to amend Chapter 60 § 62A of Massachusetts General Laws to allow delinquent taxpayers that have been placed in tax title more options to redeem the tax title account. These new laws will benefit the taxpayers in the respect that they will have greater flexibility in repaying their delinquent taxes while still maintaining the integrity of the process of collecting taxes. This law also addresses the “home equity” issue that states that the homeowner will receive back any equity in excess of any taxes and fees from the sale of a town foreclosure property in response to a recent Supreme Court case, *Tyler v. Hennepin County, Minnesota*, in which the Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for a municipality to retain the excess equity.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

ARTICLE 29. Unclaimed Property (Treasurer Request)

MOVED: That the town vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 200A §9A, which establishes a procedure for the disposition of abandoned funds, i.e. funds not claimed within one (1) year from the date of delivery, including provisions for notice, claims, appeals and disbursements.

Background: This article will allow the Treasurer to have a more streamlined and efficient process for managing funds that are unclaimed. Specifically, it will allow the Treasurer to consider any funds held in the custody of the town to be presumed abandoned unless claimed by the corporation, organization, beneficiary, or person entitled thereto within 1 (one) year after date prescribed. After completing the process requirements spelled out in Mass General Laws, which include a detailed process to attempt to notify the owner of the funds, the funds can be turned back over to the town's general fund if they remain unclaimed.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

ARTICLE 30. Shea Theater Lease (Selectboard Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote, in accordance with MGL c. 30B section 12(b), to authorize the Selectboard to enter into a lease not to exceed ten (10) years for the purpose of permitting use of the property known as the Shea Theater, located at 71 Avenue A, on such terms and conditions and for such consideration as the Selectboard deems in the best interests of the Town.

Background: The current ten-year lease agreement between the Town and Shea Theater Arts Center, Inc. expires on December 31, 2025. The Selectboard intends to issue a competitive solicitation in 2025 for the next 10-year lease of the community theater. Town Meeting authorization is required for lease terms that exceed 3 years.

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

ARTICLE 31. Franklin Regional Council of Governments Charter Change (FRCOG Request)

MOVED: That the Town vote to adopt and enact the amendments to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) Charter, said amendment(s) having been proposed by a two-thirds majority of the weighted vote of the full membership of the FRCOG Council and a majority vote of the FRCOG Executive Committee, with said amendment(s) taking full effect immediately upon adoption by two-thirds of the member towns unless a later effective date is otherwise specified; a copy of the proposed amendments is attached in Schedule, FRCOG Charter Amendment.

Background: This is the first amendment in the charter's 25+ year history. A 2/3 majority vote is required from 2/3 of member towns. The proposed changes update the Charter to remove references to the original formation of the FRCOG, align grammar, provide greater clarity, and create greater flexibility when impacting state and federal law changes. This will not change Montague's representation, or the services received by Montague from the FRCOG. More information is available here.

<https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Town-Meeting-Charter-Change-Fact-Sheet-Outline.pdf>

Selectboard Recommends 3-0

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF MONTAGUE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MAY 7, 2025
Expected Continuation Date May 14, 2025 (if needed)**

Franklin, ss.

To either of the Constables of the Town of Montague in the County of Franklin:

GREETING:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the Inhabitants of the Town of Montague qualified to vote in Town affairs to meet in the Turners Falls High School Theater, 222 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls, Massachusetts, on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 6:30 PM, with an expected continuation of the meeting on Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 6:30 PM (if needed) and to act on the following articles and any motions which may be presented.

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to receive the reports of the Officers of the Town and any committees, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to fix the salaries of all elected officials as required by law for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, as set forth in Schedule I, Elected Officials, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

**SCHEDULE I
Elected Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
MODERATOR	500	500	500
SELECTBOARD			
Chairman	2,640	2,640	2,640
Second/Third Members	2,400	2,400	2,400

**SCHEDULE I
Elected Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
BOARD OF ASSESSOR			
Chairman	1,980	1,980	1,980
Second/Third Members	1,800	1,800	1,800
BOARD OF HEALTH			
Chairman	1,980	1,980	1,980
Second/Third Members	1,800	1,800	1,800
TREE WARDEN	1,764		

*Changed to appointed STM 2/12/25

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to fix the salaries of all appointed officials as required by law for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, as set forth in Schedule II, Appointed Officials, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

**SCHEDULE II
Appointed Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
ANNUAL STIPENDS			
BOARD OF REGISTRARS (3)	625	625	625
BOARD OF REGISTRARS TOWN CLERK	900	900	900
EMERGENCY MGMT DIRECTOR	6,444	6,444	6,444
ANIMAL INSPECTOR	1,764	1,764	1,764
BARN INSPECTOR	1,400	1,400	1,400
IT COORDINATOR	2,352	2,352	2,352
POLICE IT ADMINISTRATOR	6,000	6,000	6,000
FOREST WARDEN	1,882	1,882	1,882
TREE WARDEN		1,764	1,764
HEARING OFFICER	2,500	2,500	2,500
FARMERS MARKET MANAGER	4,000	3,750	3,750

**SCHEDULE II
Appointed Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
<u>ANNUAL STIPENDS</u>			
FARMERS MARKET ASST MANAGER		750	750
SEXTON/PER BURIAL	100.00		
SEXTON STIPEND		2,000	2,000
<u>RATES PER INSPECTION</u>			
ASST. BUILDING INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
GAS INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
PLUMBING INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
<u>HOURLY RATES</u>			
EXTRA CLERICAL	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75
ELECTION WORKERS	15.00-19.75	15.00-19.75	15.00-19.75
SUMMER HIGHWAY	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75
SNOWPLOW DRIVERS	15.00-27.00	15.00-27.00	15.00-27.00
PART TIME POLICE OFFICERS	29.00-35.00	29.00-37.00	29.00-37.00
PART TIME DISPATCHERS	22.00-27.00	22.00-27.00	22.00-27.00
PARKS & RECREATION	15.00-24.25	15.00-24.25	15.00-24.25
AIRPORT INTERN	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75
<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
<u>SHIFT DIFFERENTIALS</u>			
<u>PART TIME POLICE OFFICERS</u>			
SECOND SHIFT	1.00	1.00	1.00
THIRD SHIFT	1.25	1.25	1.25
<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
<u>PART TIME DISPATCHERS</u>			
SECOND SHIFT	0.75	0.75	0.75
THIRD SHIFT	1.00	1.00	1.00
<u>PART TIME CLERICAL/LIBRARIES</u>	0.75	0.75	0.75

**SCHEDULE II
Appointed Officials**

NON-UNION EMPLOYEES NOT SHOWN ABOVE (placed on FY25 NAGE Scale)

	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Range FY2025</u>		<u>Range FY2026</u>	
		Start	End	Start	End
<u>SALARIED</u>					
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	J	103,470	127,339	103,470	127,339
ASSISTANT TOWN ADMIN	I	94,064	115,764	94,064	115,764
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
TAX COLLECTOR/TREASURER	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
TOWN CLERK	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
CHIEF OF POLICE	I	94,064	115,764	94,064	115,764
DPW SUPERINTENDENT	H	85,514	105,239	85,514	105,239
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
LIBRARY DIRECTOR	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
CWF SUPERINTENDENT	H	85,514	105,239	85,514	105,239
<u>HOURLY</u>					
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	E	25.01	30.77	25.01	30.77
POLICE LIEUTENANT	G+8.5%	40.95	45.44	40.95	45.44
POLICE CUSTODIAN	A	16.76	20.62	16.76	20.62

Informational Only: Fiscal Year 2026 budgeted wages –

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	111,427	EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	30.77
ASSISTANT TOWN ADMIN	96,417	DPW SUPERINTENDENT	98,687
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	82,394	DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	75,746
TAX COLLECTOR/TREAS	82,394		
TOWN CLERK	77,260	LIBRARY DIRECTOR	82,394
CHIEF OF POLICE*	138,917	CWF SUPERINTENDENT	105,239
POLICE LIEUTENANT	45.44	POLICE CUSTODIAN	20.62

*includes additional 20% educational incentive pay

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$12,747,055, or any other amount, for the maintenance of the several departments of the Town, said sum to be allocated in accordance with Schedule III, Budget, and for any other necessary charges, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

Schedule III
Town Operating Budget

DEPARTMENT	BUDGET	REQUEST	SELECTBOARD
	FY25	FY26	FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
113 TOWN MEETING	3,180	3,180	3,180
122 SELECTBOARD	326,230	324,662	324,662
131 FINANCE COMMITTEE	600	600	600
132 RESERVE FUND	50,000	50,000	50,000
135 TOWN ACCOUNTANT	93,000	101,374	101,374
141 ASSESSORS	186,059	180,122	180,122
145 TREASURER/COLLECTOR	206,965	208,335	208,335
151 TOWN COUNSEL	87,475	82,475	82,475
155 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	92,252	103,352	103,352
159 SHARED COSTS	93,499	104,930	104,930
161 TOWN CLERK	237,224	219,144	219,144
175 PLANNING	140,788	142,394	142,394
176 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS	700	700	700
190 PUBLIC BLDG UTILITIES	140,050	145,000	145,000
197 FARMERS MARKET	5,200	5,700	5,700
TOTAL GENERAL GOVT	1,663,222	1,671,968	1,671,968
PUBLIC SAFETY			
211 POLICE	2,067,608	2,069,965	2,069,965
211 POLICE CRUISER	60,000	-	-
212 DISPATCH	410,768	410,868	410,868
241 BUILDING INSPECTOR	155,082	149,926	149,926
244 SEALER OF WEIGHTS	7,182	7,182	7,182
291 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	6,944	6,944	6,944
292 ANIMAL CONTROL	23,658	24,185	24,185
294 FOREST WARDEN	1,882	1,882	1,882
299 TREE WARDEN	30,474	30,474	30,474
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	2,763,598	2,701,426	2,701,426
PUBLIC WORKS			
420 DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS	1,772,006	1,810,284	1,810,284
423 SNOW & ICE	321,250	324,750	324,750
433 SOLID WASTE	802,776	835,300	835,300

Schedule III
Town Operating Budget

DEPARTMENT	BUDGET	REQUEST	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND
	FY25	FY26	FY26
480 CHARGING STATIONS	11,980	3,000	3,000
491 CEMETERIES	32,150	32,150	32,150
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	2,940,162	3,005,484	3,005,484
HUMAN SERVICES			
511 BOARD OF HEALTH	168,004	172,144	172,144
HUMAN SERVICES			
541 COUNCIL ON AGING	59,272	77,207	77,207
543 VETERANS' SERVICES	77,897	101,000	101,000
TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES	305,173	350,351	350,351
CULTURE & RECREATION			
610 LIBRARIES	518,233	521,033	521,033
630 PARKS & RECREATION	164,826	169,326	169,326
691 HISTORICAL COMMISSION	500	500	500
693 WAR MEMORIALS	1,600	1,600	1,600
TOTAL CULTURE/RECREATION	685,159	692,459	692,459
DEBT SERVICE			
700 DEBT SERVICE	1,158,857	1,160,025	1,160,025
INTERGOVERNMENTAL			
840 INTERGOVERNMENTAL	116,874	119,041	119,041
MISCELLANEOUS			
910 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	2,657,083	2,926,701	2,926,701
946 GENERAL INSURANCE	119,600	119,600	119,600
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	2,776,683	3,046,301	3,046,301
TOTAL TOWN BUDGET	12,409,728	12,747,055	12,747,055

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$3,221,303 or any other amount, for the purpose of operating the Clean Water Facility and associated pumping stations, said sum to be allocated in accordance with Schedule IV, CWF Budget, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

Schedule IV
Clean Water Facility Budget

DEPT NO.		BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26
	CLEAN WATER FACILITY			
440	Wages & Expenses	2,116,590	2,209,442	2,209,442
440	Capital Outlay	58,500	58,500	58,500
700	Debt Service	478,365	485,028	485,028
910	Employee Benefits	380,719	383,183	383,183
	SUBTOTAL CWF	3,034,174	3,136,153	3,136,153
449	DPW SUBSIDIARY			
	Wages & Expenses	85,150	85,150	85,150
	SUBTOTAL DPW SUBSIDIARY	85,150	85,150	85,150
	TOTAL CWF	3,119,324	3,221,303	3,221,303

(Sewer Commission Request)

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$425,732, or any other amount, for the purpose of operating the Turners Falls Airport, said sum to be allocated in accordance with Schedule V, Airport Budget, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

Schedule V
Airport Budget

DEPT NO.		BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD
				FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26
	AIRPORT			
482	Wages & Expenses	255,238	271,625	271,625
482	Capital Outlay/Local Share	-	-	-
700	Debt Service	102,775	99,935	99,935
910	Employee Benefits	61,664	54,172	54,172
	TOTAL AIRPORT	<u>419,677</u>	<u>425,732</u>	<u>425,732</u>

(Airport Commission Request)

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to amend Article II of the Town of Montague General Bylaws, pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½, to add a new Section 7, Revolving Funds, as shown below, and to establish a spending limit of \$200,000 for the Airport Fuel revolving fund for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2025, which spending limit to be applicable for each fiscal year until such time as Town Meeting votes, prior to July 1 for the ensuing fiscal year, to increase the same; or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto:

Section 7: Revolving Funds

(a) There are hereby established in the Town of Montague, pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.44, §53E½, the following Revolving Funds:

Revolving Fund	Spending Authority	Revenue Source	Allowed Expenses
Airport Fuel	Airport Commission	Fees from sale of Airport fuel	Purchase of Airport fuel to be sold and used at the Airport

(b) Expenditures from each revolving fund set forth herein shall be subject to the spending limits established by Town Meeting or any increase therein as may be authorized in accordance with MGL c. 44, § 53E 1/2.

(Airport Commission Request)

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$52,250 or any other amount, for the purpose of funding the operations and maintenance of the Colle Building, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$841,660, or any other amount, for the purpose of paying the Franklin County Technical School District for Montague's share of the assessment for the yearly operation of the Franklin County Technical School, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Franklin County Technical School Request)

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$12,663,178, or any other amount, for the purpose of paying the Gill-Montague Regional School District for Montague's share of the assessment for the yearly operation of the Gill-Montague Regional Schools, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Gill-Montague Regional School District Request)

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$59,000, or any other amount, for the purpose of providing tuition and transportation for a Montague resident attending Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Town Accountant Request)

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$125,154, or any amount, for the purpose of funding the implementation of a collective bargaining agreement with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 274 and National Association of Government Employees for Fiscal Year 2026, or to pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$10,000, or any other amount, for the purpose of funding accessibility repairs and upgrades for the Montague Public Libraries, including any and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Library Request)

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$231,800, or any other amount, for the following Clean Water Facility projects, including any and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

- A. \$60,000 for purchase of used mini-excavator
- B. \$67,800 for purchase of portable generator and Lake Pleasant facility generator
- C. \$104,000 for replacement of two thickened sludge pumps

(Clean Water Facility Request)

ARTICLE 15. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,000,000 for the purpose of rehabilitating sewer manholes and sewer pipes to address structural defects and potential sources of inflow and infiltration to the Town’s sewer collection system, including but not limited to engineering, bidding, and construction, as well as all other costs incidental and related thereto, and to meet this appropriation to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectboard, to borrow said sum under General Laws Chapter 44, Sections 7 and 8, or any other lawful enabling authority and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor; and further to authorize the Selectboard to execute any such documents and/or agreements necessary to effectuate the purposes of this vote; or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Department of Public Works and Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$365,000, or any other amount, for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a ten-wheel dump truck, including plow, sander, and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Department of Public Works Request)

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$325,000, or any other amount, for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a dump truck, including any and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Department of Public Works Request)

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$135,000, or any other amount, for the following Department of Public Works vehicles, including all equipment and any and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

- A. \$70,000 for the purchase of a camera van
- B. \$65,000 for the purchase of a pickup truck

(Department of Public Works Request)

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$90,000, or any other amount, for the following Department of Public Works projects, including any and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

- A. \$60,000 for Oakman Street slope stabilization
- B. \$30,000 for paving alleys and non-chapter 90 eligible roadways

(Department of Public Works Request)

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$200,000, or any other amount, for the replacement of guardrails on Meadow Road, including any and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Department of Public Works Request)

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$36,470, or any other amount, for the purpose of purchasing, equipping, and making major repairs to DPW vehicles and equipment, including all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Department of Public Works Request)

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide the sum of \$255,200, or any other amount, for the following Town projects and all incidental and related costs, or to pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

- A. \$39,000 for repairs/renovation to Millers Falls library storefront
- B. \$125,000 for upgrades to Unity Park
- C. \$91,200 for design costs for Montague Center Complete Streets project

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 23: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$60,000, or any other amount, for the purpose of FRTA bus stop improvements at Industrial Boulevard and Millers Falls Road, including any and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the sum of \$67,900, or any other amount, for the purpose of abating and removing utilities from the Keith footbridge over canal, including any and all incidental and related costs, or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 25: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide the following sums, or any other amount, for the purpose of increasing the special purpose funds set forth below, or pass any vote or votes in relating thereto.

Fund	Amount (\$)
Henry Waidlich Conservation Trust Fund	\$10,000
Town Capital Stabilization Fund	\$231,890
GMRSD Stabilization Fund	\$88,718
OPEB Trust Fund	\$100,000
Total:	\$430,608

(Finance Committee Request)

ARTICLE 26: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board and the Board of Assessors to negotiate, enter into and approve a Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement known as a "PILOT" or "Tax Agreement" pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59 Section 38H(b), or any other enabling authority, between the Town of Montague and FirstLight Hydro Generating Co., its successors, assignees or affiliates, on such terms and conditions and for such period of time as negotiated by the Select Board and the Board of Assessors, for payment in lieu of taxes related to personal and/or real property associated with an electric generation facility, all as set forth in said PILOT; and further to authorize the Select Board and the Board of Assessors to take such action as may be necessary to carry out the vote taken hereunder, or to pass any vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Selectboard and Board of Assessors Request)

ARTICLE 27: To see if the town will vote pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 59 Section 5, Clause 54, to modify and increase the threshold from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for personal property accounts subject to taxation for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2025, or pass any other vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Board of Assessors Request)

ARTICLE 28: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town’s General Bylaws to add a new Section 14B to Article III under Treasurer/Collector, as set forth below entitled “Tax Title Payment Plans”, to authorize the Treasurer-Collector to pursue and establish payment agreements for parcels of land in tax title so as to allow delinquent taxpayers to pay off their tax liens over time, as authorized by M.G.L. c. 60 § 62A, as amended by sections 89-91 of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024, or pass any other vote or votes in relation thereto.

Section 14B: Tax Title Payment Plans

- A. Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. c. 60, § 62A, the Town Treasurer-Collector shall have the authority to enter into written payment agreements with any person entitled to redeem ownership of parcels in tax title which have been taken by the Town as a result of nonpayment of real estate taxes. The payment agreement shall be executed on such terms and conditions for payment of the delinquent taxes, interest and any other costs, fees or charges associated with same, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 60, § 62A and this bylaw. The Treasurer-Collector shall not refuse to enter into agreements with eligible taxpayers.
- B. This bylaw shall apply to all taxpayers with parcels in the following assessment categories of tax title in the Town:
 - 1. Commercial property;
 - 2. Residential property;
 - 3. Industrial; and
 - 4. Open space.
- C. The following conditions must be met prior to the Town entering into a payment agreement:
 - 1. The Town has not filed a petition to foreclose the rights of redemption with the Land Court, and the recording date of the Instrument of Taking recorded in the Franklin County Registry of Deeds must be no more than ten (10) years from the date of the proposed agreement; and
 - 2. All real estate taxes and water/sewer user fees due for the current fiscal year assessed against the parcel must be paid to date.
- D. All payment agreements shall comply with the following minimum requirements:
 - 1. The payment agreement shall be for a term not to exceed ten (10) years provided, however, that nothing herein shall preclude the taxpayer from completing payments of the amount owed within a shorter period of time;

2. The payment agreement shall include a waiver of not to exceed fifty percent (50%) of the interest that has accrued in the tax title account, but only if the taxpayer fully complies with the terms of the agreement (no taxes or collection costs may be waived); and
 3. The payment agreement shall state the amount of the payment due from the taxpayer at the time of execution of the agreement, which shall be at least ten percent (10%) of the amount needed to redeem the parcel at the inception of the agreement. The taxpayer must then agree to pay the remaining balance due to the Town in equal monthly installments.
- E. During the term of the agreement, the Treasurer-Collector may not bring an action to foreclose the tax title unless payments are not made in accordance with the schedule set out in the payment agreement or timely payments are not made on other amounts due to the Town that constitute a lien on the same parcel.
- F. Nothing in this bylaw shall preempt or preclude the authority of the Treasurer-Collector to accept partial payments or to negotiate and enter into payment agreements authorized by M.G.L. c. 60, §§ 22 and § 22A, or any other statutory authority.

(Treasurer Request)

ARTICLE 29: To see if the town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 200A, §9A, which establishes a procedure for the disposition of abandoned funds, i.e. funds not claimed within one (1) year from the date of delivery, including provisions for notice, claims, appeals and disbursements, the full text of which can be found at <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartII/TitleII/Chapter200a/Section9A>, or pass any other vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Treasurer Request)

ARTICLE 30: To see if the Town will vote, in accordance with MGL c. 30B section 12(b), to authorize the Selectboard to enter into a lease not to exceed ten (10) years for the purpose of permitting use of the property known as the Shea Theater, located at 71 Avenue A, on such terms and conditions and for such consideration as the Selectboard deems in the best interests of the Town, or pass any other vote or votes in relation thereto.

(Selectboard Request)

ARTICLE 31: To see if the Town will vote to adopt and enact the amendments to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) Charter, said amendment(s) having been proposed

by a two-thirds majority of the weighted vote of the full membership of the FRCOG Council and a majority vote of the FRCOG Executive Committee, with said amendment(s) taking full effect immediately upon adoption by two-thirds of the member towns unless a later effective date is otherwise specified; a copy of the proposed amendments is attached in Schedule ---, FRCOG Charter Amendment, or take any action relative thereto.

(Franklin Regional Council of Governments Request)

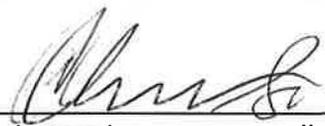
And you are directed to serve this warrant by posting attested copies thereof in some conspicuous place in each of the Post Offices, Libraries, Website, and Town Hall of the Town, at least fourteen days before said meeting.

Hereof fail not and make due return of this document with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk fourteen days before said meeting.

Given under our hands this 16th day of April in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Five.



Matthew Lord



Christopher M. Boutwell, Sr.



Richard Kuklewicz, Chairman
Selectboard, Town of Montague

Franklin, ss Montague, MA April 16, 2025

Pursuant to the within warrant, I have warned the Inhabitants of the Town of Montague by posting attested copies of the same in a conspicuous place in each of the Post Offices, Libraries, and the Town Hall of the Town of Montague at least seven days before said meeting as within directed.



Constable of Montague

**SCHEDULE I
Elected Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
MODERATOR	500	500	500
SELECTBOARD			
Chairman	2,640	2,640	2,640
Second/Third Members	2,400	2,400	2,400
BOARD OF ASSESSOR			
Chairman	1,980	1,980	1,980
Second/Third Members	1,800	1,800	1,800
BOARD OF HEALTH			
Chairman	1,980	1,980	1,980
Second/Third Members	1,800	1,800	1,800
TREE WARDEN	1,764		
*Changed to appointed STM 2/12/25			

**SCHEDULE II
Appointed Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
<u>ANNUAL STIPENDS</u>			
BOARD OF REGISTRARS (3)	625	625	625
BOARD OF REGISTRARS TOWN CLERK	900	900	900
EMERGENCY MGMT DIRECTOR	6,444	6,444	6,444
ANIMAL INSPECTOR	1,764	1,764	1,764
BARN INSPECTOR	1,400	1,400	1,400
IT COORDINATOR	2,352	2,352	2,352
POLICE IT ADMINISTRATOR	6,000	6,000	6,000
FOREST WARDEN	1,882	1,882	1,882
TREE WARDEN		1,764	1,764
HEARING OFFICER	2,500	2,500	2,500
FARMERS MARKET MANAGER	4,000	3,750	3,750
FARMERS MARKET ASST MANAGER		750	750
SEXTON/PER BURIAL	100.00		
SEXTON STIPEND		2,000	2,000
<u>RATES PER INSPECTION</u>			
ASST. BUILDING INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
GAS INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
PLUMBING INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR	45.00	45.00	45.00
<u>HOURLY RATES</u>			
EXTRA CLERICAL	<u>Ranges/hr.</u> 15.00-18.75	<u>Ranges/hr.</u> 15.00-18.75	<u>Ranges/hr.</u> 15.00-18.75
ELECTION WORKERS	15.00-19.75	15.00-19.75	15.00-19.75
SUMMER HIGHWAY	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75
SNOWPLOW DRIVERS	15.00-27.00	15.00-27.00	15.00-27.00
PART TIME POLICE OFFICERS	29.00-35.00	29.00-37.00	29.00-37.00
PART TIME DISPATCHERS	22.00-27.00	22.00-27.00	22.00-27.00
PARKS & RECREATION	15.00-24.25	15.00-24.25	15.00-24.25
AIRPORT INTERN	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75	15.00-18.75

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY25 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY26 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY26 RECOMMEND</u>
SHIFT DIFFERENTIALS			
<u>PART TIME POLICE OFFICERS</u>			
SECOND SHIFT	1.00	1.00	1.00
THIRD SHIFT	1.25	1.25	1.25
<u>PART TIME DISPATCHERS</u>			
SECOND SHIFT	0.75	0.75	0.75
THIRD SHIFT	1.00	1.00	1.00
<u>PART TIME CLERICAL/LIBRARIES</u>	0.75	0.75	0.75

**SCHEDULE II
Appointed Officials**

NON-UNION EMPLOYEES NOT SHOWN ABOVE (placed on FY25 NAGE Scale)

	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Range FY2025</u>		<u>Range FY2026</u>	
		Start	End	Start	End
<u>SALARIED</u>					
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	J	103,470	127,339	103,470	127,339
ASSISTANT TOWN ADMIN	I	94,064	115,764	94,064	115,764
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
TAX COLLECTOR/TREASURER	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
TOWN CLERK	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
CHIEF OF POLICE	I	94,064	115,764	94,064	115,764
DPW SUPERINTENDENT	H	85,514	105,239	85,514	105,239
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
LIBRARY DIRECTOR	G	67,277	82,394	67,277	82,394
CWF SUPERINTENDENT	H	85,514	105,239	85,514	105,239
<u>HOURLY</u>					
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	E	25.01	30.77	25.01	30.77
POLICE LIEUTENANT	G+8.5%	40.95	45.44	40.95	45.44
POLICE CUSTODIAN	A	16.76	20.62	16.76	20.62

Informational Only: Fiscal Year 2026 budgeted wages –

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	111,427	EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	30.77
ASSISTANT TOWN ADMIN	96,417	DPW SUPERINTENDENT	98,687
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	82,394	DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	75,746
TAX COLLECTOR/TREAS	82,394		
TOWN CLERK	77,260	LIBRARY DIRECTOR	82,394
CHIEF OF POLICE*	138,917	CWF SUPERINTENDENT	105,239
POLICE LIEUTENANT	45.44	POLICE CUSTODIAN	20.62

*includes additional 20% educational incentive pay

Schedule III
Town Operating Budget

DEPT NO.	BUDGET	REQUEST	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND
	FY25	FY26	FY26
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
113 TOWN MEETING	3,180	3,180	3,180
122 SELECTBOARD	326,230	324,662	324,662
131 FINANCE COMMITTEE	600	600	600
132 RESERVE FUND	50,000	50,000	50,000
135 TOWN ACCOUNTANT	93,000	101,374	101,374
141 ASSESSORS	186,059	180,122	180,122
145 TREASURER/COLLECTOR	206,965	208,335	208,335
151 TOWN COUNSEL	87,475	82,475	82,475
155 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	92,252	103,352	103,352
159 SHARED COSTS	93,499	104,930	104,930
161 TOWN CLERK	237,224	219,144	219,144
175 PLANNING	140,788	142,394	142,394
176 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS	700	700	700
190 PUBLIC BLDG UTILITIES	140,050	145,000	145,000
197 FARMERS MARKET	5,200	5,700	5,700
TOTAL GENERAL GOVT	1,663,222	1,671,968	1,671,968
PUBLIC SAFETY			
211 POLICE	2,067,608	2,069,965	2,069,965
211 POLICE CRUISER	60,000	-	-
212 DISPATCH	410,768	410,868	410,868
241 BUILDING INSPECTOR	155,082	149,926	149,926
244 SEALER OF WEIGHTS	7,182	7,182	7,182
291 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	6,944	6,944	6,944
292 ANIMAL CONTROL	23,658	24,185	24,185
294 FOREST WARDEN	1,882	1,882	1,882
299 TREE WARDEN	30,474	30,474	30,474
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	2,763,598	2,701,426	2,701,426
PUBLIC WORKS			
420 DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS	1,772,006	1,810,284	1,810,284
423 SNOW & ICE	321,250	324,750	324,750
433 SOLID WASTE	802,776	835,300	835,300
480 CHARGING STATIONS	11,980	3,000	3,000
491 CEMETERIES	32,150	32,150	32,150
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	2,940,162	3,005,484	3,005,484

Schedule III
Town Operating Budget

DEPT NO.	BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26
HUMAN SERVICES			
511 BOARD OF HEALTH	168,004	172,144	172,144
541 COUNCIL ON AGING	59,272	77,207	77,207
543 VETERANS' SERVICES	77,897	101,000	101,000
TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES	305,173	350,351	350,351
CULTURE & RECREATION			
610 LIBRARIES	518,233	521,033	521,033
630 PARKS & RECREATION	164,826	169,326	169,326
691 HISTORICAL COMMISSION	500	500	500
693 WAR MEMORIALS	1,600	1,600	1,600
TOTAL CULTURE/RECREATION	685,159	692,459	692,459
DEBT SERVICE			
700 DEBT SERVICE	1,158,857	1,160,025	1,160,025
INTERGOVERNMENTAL			
840 INTERGOVERNMENTAL	116,874	119,041	119,041
MISCELLANEOUS			
910 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	2,657,083	2,926,701	2,926,701
946 GENERAL INSURANCE	119,600	119,600	119,600
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	2,776,683	3,046,301	3,046,301
TOTAL TOWN BUDGET	12,409,728	12,747,055	12,747,055

Schedule IV
Clean Water Facility Budget

DEPT NO.	BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD
			FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26
CLEAN WATER FACILITY			
440 Wages & Expenses	2,116,590	2,209,442	2,209,442
440 Capital Outlay	58,500	58,500	58,500
700 Debt Service	478,365	485,028	485,028
910 Employee Benefits	380,719	383,183	383,183
SUBTOTAL CWF	3,034,174	3,136,153	3,136,153
449 DPW SUBSIDIARY			
Wages & Expenses	85,150	85,150	85,150
SUBTOTAL DPW SUBSIDIARY	85,150	85,150	85,150
TOTAL CWF	3,119,324	3,221,303	3,221,303

Schedule V
Airport Budget

DEPT NO.	BUDGET	REQUEST	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND
	FY25	FY26	FY26
AIRPORT			
482 Wages & Expenses	255,238	271,625	271,625
482 Capital Outlay/Local Share	-	-	-
700 Debt Service	102,775	99,935	99,935
910 Employee Benefits	61,664	54,172	54,172
TOTAL AIRPORT	<u>419,677</u>	<u>425,732</u>	<u>425,732</u>

General Category : General Government

TOWN MEETING

Dept # 113

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5115 Moderator	500	500	500		500		
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	500	500	500	-	500		
5279 Custodial Services							
5314 Moderator Seminars	150		150		150		
5315 Constable/Other ProfTech	200	60	300		300		
5344 Postage	1,000	803	1,000		1,000		
5420 Office Supplies/Envelopes	200	-	200		200		
5490 Food & Drinks	750	744	850		850		
5586 Miscellaneous Supply		-					
5710 In-State Travel	150	-	150		150		
5730 Dues and Memberships	30	-	30		30		
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,480	1,607	2,680	-	2,680		-
TOTAL TOWN MEETING	2,980	2,107	3,180	-	3,180	3,180	3,180

Change - 0.00%

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5115 Moderator	500	500	-		
5279 Custodial Services	-	-	-		
5314 Moderator Seminars	150	150	-		
5315 Constable/Other ProfTech	300	300	-		
5344 Postage	1,000	1,000	-		
5420 Office Supplies/envelopes	200	200	-		
5586 Miscellaneous Supply	850	850	-		
5490 Food & Drinks	-	-	-		
5710 In-State Travel	150	150	-		
5730 Dues and Memberships	30	30	-		

Totals 3,180 3,180 -



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: **Selectboard Office** Submitted by: Walter Ramsey

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

Net reduction by 0.48%. Changes are relatively minor.

-Remove \$500 Streetscape maintenance budget from Selectboard Office because it is redundant to DPW's streetscape maintenance line item.

-Increase in funding for food for staff and public meetings. Food is an essential component of team building and participation. This will support one annual staff-wide appreciation luncheon event which was piloted with great success in FY25.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

FY26 will see continued roll out of the staffing transition at the SB office which happened in early FY25. The SB office is fully staffed and functioning at full steam, as intended. The FY26 wages budget is adjusted to the new staff for each respective position.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any of your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

No

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

No

General Category : General Government

SELECTBOARD

Dept # 122

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111 Wages Full Time	272,934	278,830	268,801	123,963.25	264,107		
5113 Wages Part Time	25,774	19,860	21,151	10,900.00	23,377		
5115 Chair, Selectmen	2,355	2,355	2,640	1,320.00	2,640		
5115 2nd Member	2,140	2,140	2,400	1,200.00	2,400		
5115 3rd Member	2,140	2,140	2,400	1,200.00	2,400		
5124 P/T Temp Wages							
5144 Longevity	1,900	1,900	2,000	1,100.00	2,000		
5145 Cell Phone Stipend	938	900	938	432.75	938		
5194 Vacation Leave Buy-Back (@7 weeks)		22,051					
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	308,181	330,176	300,330	140,116.00	297,862	-	-
5314 Seminars	2,000	330	2,500	25.00	2,500		
5315 Other Prof/Tech/Minutes	8,000	6,028	8,000	2,470.00	8,000		
5344 Postage	300	282	300	159.74	300		
5345 Advertising	1,200	2,043	1,300		1,000		
5420 Office Supplies	4,500	2,733	5,500	576.66	5,500		
5450 Streetscape Maintenance	500	329	500		-		
5581 Subscriptions/Books	600	450	1,000		1,000		
5582 Food	300	355	300	1,369.80	1,500		
5590 Equipment < \$5K	500	6,140	500		500		
5710 Travel	2,000	1,588	3,000	160.90	3,000		
5730 Dues & Memberships	2,500	3,038	3,000	2,720.07	3,500		
TOTAL EXPENSES	22,400	23,316	25,900	7,482.17	26,800	24,050	-
TOTAL SELECTBOARD	330,581	353,492	326,230	147,598.17	324,662	324,662	324,662

Change (1,568) -0.48%

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Hrs	Total Annual	DOH	FY26	Svc Long
6/14/2010	Town Administrator	J4			111,427.00	6/10/2010	16	900
6/26/2024	Asst Town Administrator	I2			96,417.00	6/26/2024	2	-
10/14/1997	Executive Assistant FT	E10	30.77	1,828.50	56,262.95	10/14/1997	28	1,100
9/20/2023	Selectboard AA 20 hrs	B6	22.37	1,045.00	23,376.65	9/20/2023	2	-

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111 Wages Full Time	268,801	264,107	(4,694)	-1.75%	WR hired 7/24 at J3. CN hired 6/24 at I1
5113 Wages Part Time	21,151	23,377	2,226	10.52%	AA hired 9/23 at B5. no change in hours
5115 Chair, Selectmen	2,640	2,640	-		
5115 2nd Member	2,400	2,400	-		
5115 3rd Member	2,400	2,400	-		
5124 Part Time Temp Wages	-	-	-		
5144 Longevity	2,000	2,000	-		
5145 Cell Phone Stipend	938	938	-		
5314 Seminars	2,500	2,500	-		
5315 Other Prof/Tech (mtg Minutes for FY18)	8,000	8,000	-		
5344 Postage	300	300	-		
5345 Advertising	1,300	1,000	(300)	-23.08%	Trying to pay for ads out of project budgets
5420 Office Supplies	5,500	5,500	-		
5450 Streetscape Maintenance	500	-	(500)	-100.00%	Redundant to DPW Streetscape Maint Budg
5581 Subscriptions/Books	1,000	1,000	-		
5582 Food	300	1,500	1,200	400.00%	Staff meetings
5590 Equipment < \$5K	500	500	-		
5710 Travel	3,000	3,000	-		
5730 Dues & Memberships	3,000	3,500	500	16.67%	MMA, MMHR, STAM, AICP
Totals	326,230	324,662	(1,568)	-0.48%	

General Category : General Government

RESERVE FUND

Dept # 132

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5780	Reserve Fund	50,000	6,277	50,000	36,000.00	50,000		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	50,000	6,277	50,000	36,000.00	50,000		-
	TOTAL RESERVE FUND	50,000	6,277	50,000	36,000.00	50,000	50,000	50,000
					Change	-	0.00%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Accounting Submitted by: Angelica Desroches

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

For FY26 I am proposing a software change in the Accounting office. The current software is called BMSI and is over 20 years old. I am changing the Accounting office to VADAR which is a cloud based software that is currently being used in the Treasurer/Collector/Assessors offices. This change will put all the financial offices of Montague in the same system and will create efficiency in the processes of these departments. It will eliminate duplicate entry of information and therefore save staff time for other tasks.

I have reduced other portions of the budget to reflect a shift towards more digital record keeping and communication.

The other line I have increased is memberships to include a membership to Government Finance Officers Association which will allow me to have access to free training and updates to any major changes coming in the governmental finance world.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

During my time with the Town this fiscal year I have worked on decreasing printing and increasing the usage of digital record keeping and electronic communication. I plan to continue to work on finding efficient, effective, and technological ways to improve the transparency of the Accounting office.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

None that I have noted to date.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the status of each of those expenditures/projects.

N/A

General Category : General Government

ACCOUNTANT

Dept # 135

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Wages Full Time	80,384	80,384	82,394	43,396.08	82,394		
5192	Sick and Vacation Buyback				12,963.32			
5144	Longevity	1,000	1,100	1,100	1,100.00	-		
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES		81,384	81,484	83,494	57,459	82,394		-
5247	Computer Software Maintenance	5,900	5,450	6,490	5,996.00	16,580		
5250	Software Upgrade - Cloud Based							
5305	Printing/Bookbinding	200	176	200	162.35			
5314	Seminars	350	60	350	102.59	400		
5344	Postage	50	14	50	15.13			
5345	Advertising		1,137					
5380	Other Prof/Tech (contingency for upgrade)							
5420	Office Supplies	2,300	982	2,100	2,674.47	1,600		
5710	Travel	266		266		200		
5730	Dues & Memberships	50	50	50	220.00	200		
TOTAL EXPENSES		9,116	7,869	9,506	9,170.54	18,980		-
TOTAL ACCOUNTANT		90,500	89,353	93,000	66,629.94	101,374	101,374	101,374
Change						8,374	9.00%	

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Anniv Date	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Total Annual
8/19/2024	Town Accountant	G10	82,394.00

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111	82,394	82,394	-		
5144	1,100	-	(1,100)	-100.00%	New accountant doesn't have longevity
5247	6,490	16,580	10,090	155.47%	Changing software from BMSI to VADAR
5250	-	-	-		
5305	200	-	(200)	-100.00%	Save records digitally instead of printing
5314	350	400	50	14.29%	Increase in annual conference
5315	-	-	-		
5341	-	-	-		
5344	50	-	(50)	-100.00%	No longer mailing book binding
5380	-	-	-		
5420	2,100	1,600	(500)	-23.81%	Reduce printing with change of staff
5590	-	-	-		
5710	266	200	(66)	-24.81%	More remote trainings available
5730	50	200	150	300.00%	GFOA membership for access to trainings

Totals 93,000 101,374 8,374 9.00%

General Category : General Government

ASSESSORS

Dept # 141

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Wages Full Time	119,096	119,095	123,299	59,004.25	124,067		
5115	Chair	1,765	1,765	1,980	990.00	1,980		
5115	2nd Member	1,605	1,605	1,800	900.00	1,800		
5115	3rd Member	1,605	1,605	1,800	900.00	1,800		
5124	Temporary Wages							
5144	Longevity	300	300	300	300.00	500		
5193	Vacation Buy Back							
5194	Sick Leave Buy Back							
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	124,371	124,370	129,179	62,094.25	130,147		
5248	Office Equipment R & M	1,000				-		
5302	Legal	10,500	22,252	10,500	17,219.66	10,500		
5305	Printing/Bookbinding	300		300	172.15	225		
5306	Patriot Software Contract	9,500	8,660	9,000	9,085.00	9,000		
5307	VADAR Annual Software Maintenance	600	600	600	600.00	600		
5308	Mapping/GIS/Internet	6,000	8,407	6,500	3,800.00	6,500		
5311	Registry of Deeds	50	10	50		50		
5314	Seminars	3,000	2,492	3,000	1,074.04	2,000		
5315	Other Professional/Technical	15,000	3,860	10,000	10,540.00	4,500		
5316	Utility Valuation Services	11,130	11,130	11,130		11,130		
5344	Postage	900	988	1,000	338.34	1,000		
5345	Advertising	400				-		
5350	Citizen Serve 1 license - none for FY25	1,500	1,800			-		
5380	Cyclical/Interim Revaluation	3,000	1,565	2,500		2,500		
5420	Office Supplies	1,500	1,118	1,500	807.97	1,500		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	100	109	100		-		
5710	Travel	500	1,797	250	957.58	250		
5730	Dues & Memberships	450	485	450	170.00	220		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	65,430	65,274	56,880	44,764.74	49,975		-
	TOTAL BOARD OF ASSESSORS	189,801	189,644	186,059	106,858.99	180,122	180,122	180,122

Change (5,937) -3.19%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Hours	Total Annual
8/17/2015	Director of Assessing	G10			82,394.00
9/27/2021	Assessing Technician	B7	22.79	1,828.50	41,671.52
					124,065.52

DOH	FY26	Svc Long
8/17/2015	10	500.00
9/27/2021	4	-
Total		\$500

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111 Wages Full Time	123,299	124,067	768	0.62%	Contractual steps
5115 Chair	1,980	1,980	-		
5115 2nd Member	1,800	1,800	-		
5115 3rd Member	1,800	1,800	-		
5144 Longevity	300	500	200	66.67%	Contractual
5248 Office Equipment R & M	-	-	-		
5302 Legal	10,500	10,500	-		
5305 Printing/Bookbinding	300	225	(75)	-25.00%	Back years caught up - only need 1 year
5306 Patriot Software Contract	9,000	9,000	-		
5307 Point Annual Software Maintenance	600	600	-		
5308 Mapping/GIS/Internet	6,500	6,500	-		
5311 Registry of Deeds	50	50	-		
5314 Seminars	3,000	2,000	(1,000)	-33.33%	
5315 Other Professional/Technical	10,000	4,500	(5,500)	-55.00%	Personal Property Accounts 100% complete
5316 Utility Appraisal Service	11,130	11,130	-		
5344 Postage	1,000	1,000	-		
5345 Advertising	-	-	-		
5350 CitizenServe 1 license	-	-	-		
5380 Cyclical/Interim Revaluation	2,500	2,500	-		
5420 Office Supplies	1,500	1,500	-		
5581 Subscriptions/Books	100	-	(100)	-100.00%	no subscriptions/books needed
5710 Travel	250	250	-		
5730 Dues & Memberships	450	220	(230)	-51.11%	MAAO Dues 2 @ 100 FCAA 2 @ 10

Totals 186,059 180,122 (5,937) -3.19%



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Treasurer/Tax Collector Submitted by: Eileen Seymour

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

The only notable change in my budget for FY26 is a placeholder for a payout of my accrued flex time and personal time from when I was appointed up until the time that I became elected which was from 10/31/2016 to 05/2019. This is pending the approval of my contract with the town when I go back to being appointed in May of 2025. This amount is \$2,119.00.

Also, I will be removing the \$2,000.00 line item for part-time help as we did not utilize that in FY25 as we had anticipated.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

We have moved to outsourcing our bill printing and mailing, which so far has worked out well. To date we have only had two mailings but will have more as time goes on.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

I do not foresee any challenges to the FY25 budget; however, I do have minimal concerns about our switch to quarterly tax billing in FY26 and the additional burden it may put on the office as collection of taxes will expand to four times a year as opposed to two. At this point, we will let it play out and see if the volume increases enough to warrant any changes.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

N/A

General Category : General Government

TREAS/COLLECTOR

Dept # 145

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2023	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Wages Full Time	169,078	129,575	132,295	63,309.25	133,246		
5113	Wages Part Time			-		-		
5113	Additional P/T Hours (see note below)			2,000		-		
5144	Longevity	1,800	1,300	1,300	300.00	1,300		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	300	300	300	144.25	300		
5193	Vacation Buy Back					2,119		
5194	Sick Leave Buy Back							
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	171,178	131,175	135,895	63,753.50	136,965		-
5306	Software Maint, charges	6,200	6,184	6,200	5,584.00	6,200		
5307	Tax Billing Services			9,000	3,846.77	9,000		
5314	Seminars	200		200	458.59	500		
5315	Financial Advisor Services	2,600	650	2,600		2,600		
5344	Postage	16,000	15,982	16,500	3,254.65	16,500		
5345	Advertising	-		-		-		
5420	Office Supplies	8,000	6,359	8,000	1,866.43	8,000		
5590	Equipment < \$20K		8,905					
5710	Travel	600	343	400	231.66	400		
5730	Dues & Memberships	120	100	120	60.00	120		
5740	Insurance	3,150	3,020	3,050		3,050		
5781	Tax Title Foreclosure	23,000	22,442	25,000	10,380.67	25,000		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	59,870	63,985	71,070	25,682.77	71,370		-
	TOTAL TREASURER/COLLECTOR	231,048	195,160	206,965	89,436.27	208,335	208,335	208,335

Change

1,370

0.66%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Hours	Total Annual	DOH	Svc FY26	Long
10/31/2016	Treasurer/Collector	G10			82,394.00		9	300
	Treasurer MGL Ch41:108P Stipend							
4/12/2004	Treasury & Collections Spec (35/wk)				-			
	Assistant Treas/Coll	D9	27.81	1,828.50	50,850.59	4/12/2004	22	1,000
	Treasury & Collections Spec (20/wk)							
Total								1,300

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111	Wages Full Time	132,295	133,246	951	0.72%	
5113	Wages Part Time	-	-	-		
5113	Additional P/T Hours (see note below)	2,000	-	(2,000)	-100.00%	Not used in FY25
5144	Longevity	1,300	1,300	-		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	300	300	-		
5193	Vacation Buy Back	-	2,119	2,119		Buyback of flex/pers time (pending cont approva
5194	Sick Leave Buy Back	-	-	-		
5306	Software Maint, charges	6,200	6,200	-		
5307	Tax Billing Service	9,000	9,000	-		
5314	Seminars	200	500	300	150.00%	Incr in Treas/Collector annual school fees
5315	Financial Advisor Services	2,600	2,600	-		
5344	Postage	16,500	16,500	-		
5345	Advertising	-	-	-		
5420	Office Supplies	8,000	8,000	-		
5590	Equipment < \$5K	-	-	-		
5710	Travel	400	400	-		
5730	Dues & Memberships	120	120	-		
5740	Insurance	3,050	3,050	-		
5781	Tax Title Foreclosure	25,000	25,000	-		
Totals		206,965	208,335	1,370	0.66%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Town Counsel Submitted by: Walter Ramsey

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

Planning for a 20% reduction in labor negotiations budget because labor negotiations with NEPBA, UEW, and NAGE are on track to be substantially wrapped up in the second half of FY25. The budget was bumped up by 20% in FY25 in anticipation of these ongoing negotiations.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

N/A

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

None

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

N/A

General Category : General Government

TOWN COUNSEL

Dept # 151

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5301	Labor Negotiations	20,000	11,273	25,000	2,655.50	20,000		
5302	Legal	55,000	64,563	57,475	13,873.87	57,475		
5304	FERC Relicensing	5,000		5,000		5,000		
5303	Counsel - Pipeline Legal Exp							
	TOTAL EXPENSES	80,000	75,836	87,475	16,529.37	82,475		
	TOTAL TOWN COUNSEL	80,000	75,836	87,475	16,529.37	82,475	82,475	82,475

Change (5,000) -5.72%

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5301	Labor Negotiations	25,000	20,000	(5,000)	-20.00%	bulk FY26-28 contract negotiations in FY25
5302	Legal	57,475	57,475	-		
5304	FERC Relicensing	5,000	5,000	-		Ongoing process

Totals 87,475 82,475 (5,000) -5.72%



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Information Technology Submitted by: Wendy Bogusz

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

Starting in FY24 Suzor began servicing the Town at the tier 3 plan at the cost of a tier 2 plan. It was agreed to have a gradual increase each year to allow for an easier transition as opposed to a very large increase in one year. Suzor did this to ensure the Town was getting the service desired while working to get to the appropriate cost.

- Below is the breakdown of each year:
 - FY25 - \$12,000 increase
 - FY26 - \$7,500 increase (we are currently at this increase)
 - FY27 - \$7,500 increase

After FY27 the Town will have achieved the plan and will no longer see large increases to the cost of service. Suzor's typically has a 2-2.5% increase on a regular annual basis.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

N/A

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

N/A

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

N/A

General Category : General Government

Information Technology

Dept #155

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5100	IT Administrator Stipend	2,100	2,100	2,352	1,176.00	2,352		
5124	PT Temp							
	TOTAL WAGES	2,100	2,100	2,352	1,176.00	2,352		
5247	IT Consultant	34,000	33,203	45,000	44,130.08	52,500		
5341	Comcast/Crocker DSL Line	3,000	3,739	3,000	2,072.25	4,200		
5346	Cyber Security (Anti-Virus /Acronis)	1,100		2,400		3,700		
5347	Website (Domain,Hosting,Reg/Sec Cert)	600		2,100	1,020.00	2,100		
5348	Website Hosting/Maintenance (WebWorks)	800	900					
5349	Website Address Reg/Sec Cert (GoDaddy 2	600						
5350	Software Licenses (Zoom,Office365,Docusig	2,800	2,480	17,800		18,900		
5351	Office 365 Licenses	9,000	9,224		13,184.92			
5352	DocuSign	3,500	2,739					
5353	Email Licenses	1,000						
5354	Adobe Acrobat		2,087		23.21			
5355	Acronis Cyber Protection							
5580	Miscellaneous Expenses	3,000	7,904	3,000	160.20	3,000		
5590	Equipment <\$5K	19,000		16,600		16,600		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	78,400	62,276	89,900	60,590.66	101,000		-
	TOTAL	80,500	64,376	92,252	61,766.66	103,352	103,352	103,352

Change 11,100 12.03%

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5100	IT Administrator Stipend	2,352	2,352	-		
5247	IT Consultant	45,000	52,500	7,500	16.67%	
5341	Comcast/Crocker DSL Line	3,000	4,200	1,200	40.00%	
5346	Cyber Security (Anti-Virus /Acronis)	2,400	3,700	1,300	54.17%	
5347	Domain Hosting (dot.gov)	2,100	2,100	-		
5348	Website Hosting/Maintenance (WebWorks)	-	-	-		
5349	Website Address Reg/Sec Cert (GoDaddy 2	-	-	-		
5350	Software Licenses (Zoom,Office365,DocuSign)	17,800	18,900	1,100	6.18%	
5351	Office 365 Licenses	-	-	-		
5352	DocuSign	-	-	-		
5353	Email Licenses	-	-	-		
5355	Acronis Cyber Protection	-	-	-		
5580	Miscellaneous Expenses	3,000	3,000	-		
5590	Equipment <\$5K	16,600	16,600	-		
Totals		92,252	103,352	11,100	12.03%	

General Category : General Government

SHARED COSTS

Dept #159

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5249	Copier/Duplicator Lease	4,400	4,200	5,000	1,566.71	5,000		
5304	Annual Audit	40,000	35,000	44,000	35,000.00	47,000		
5305	Printing Annual Report							
5306	GASB 45	3,800	3,870	3,800	1,935.00	3,800		
5307	Continuing Disclosure Fee (Debt)	2,250	2,250	2,250		2,250		
5310	Citizen Serve Annual Fees FY20-Dept	6,000	7,200	6,000		6,000		
5340	Shared Telephone Exp	15,000	13,259	15,000	6,158.43	15,000		
5344	Postage Meter Rental	4,578	5,353	7,500	2,620.76	7,500		
5350	Code Red - Price Locked to 2026	6,559	6,609	6,609	7,200.00	7,000		
5355	Common Monthly Shredding Service		448	720	380.46	760		
5420	Shared Paper	3,200	566	2,500	554.99	2,500		
5580	Copier/Duplicator Supplies	120	-	120		120		
	Break Room/Meeting Room Supplies					500		
	Payroll Services Software					7,500		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	85,907	78,755	93,499	55,416.35	104,930		104,930
	TOTAL	85,907	78,755	93,499	55,416.35	104,930	104,930	104,930

Change 11,431 12.23%

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5249	Copier/Duplicator Lease	5,000	5,000	-		Lease is up 2025
5304	Annual Audit	44,000	47,000	3,000	6.82%	41K + 6K if add'l single audit needed
5305	Printing Annual Report	-	-	-		
5306	GASB 45	3,800	3,800	-		
5307	Continuing Disclosure Fee (Debt)	2,250	2,250	-		
5310	Citizen Serve Annual Fees (Permits)	6,000	6,000	-		
5340	Shared Telephone Exp	15,000	15,000	-		
5344	Postage Meter Rental	7,500	7,500	-		
5350	Code Red - Price Locked Forever	6,609	7,000	391	5.92%	Reflects actual costs.
5355	Common Monthly Shredding Service	720	760	40	5.56%	Relects actual costs
5420	Shared Paper	2,500	2,500	-		
5580	Copier/Duplicator Supplies	120	120	-		
	Break Room/Meeting Room Supplies	-	500	500	100.00%	
	Payroll Services Software	-	7,500	7,500	100.00%	\$500 implementation fee wont be in FY27
Totals		93,499	104,930	11,431	12.23%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Town Clerk Submitted by: Kathern F. Pierce

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

No notable changes, however, items for the schedule:

Elections Schedule: There is a fiscal four-year election cycle that keeps repeating.

Elections Fiscally:

- FY2026 will be **1** election, (Annual Town Election)
- FY2027 will be **3** elections, (State Primary, State Election, and our Annual Town Election)
- FY2028 will be **2** elections, (Presidential Primary and our Annual Town Election)
- FY2029 will be **3** elections, (State Primary, Presidential Election, and our Annual Town Election)
- FY2030 will be **1** election, (Annual Town Election) - It keeps repeating 3, 2, 3, and 1 Elections

Administrative Position will need to be hired, this position will require someone with experience in the Town Clerks' Office.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

NEW TECHNOLOGY:

Consistently busy in the Town Clerks' Office as the State is launching a brand-new Voter Registration System. We have had very limited to no information on the changes, it is expected that the new system will be up and running in 2025. This means Tina and I will be learning a brand-new Voter Registration system, requiring us to attend conferences that we were unable to attend last year due to the volume of work and the fact that the State did not roll out the new system, there was no value attending classes during the busiest time in The Clerks' Office.

Yes, busy here in the Town Clerks' Office the Depart of Public Health, Registry of Vital Records and Statistics also thought it would be a good time to launch their new system as well. The same for the DPH, Registry of Vital Records and Statistics, little to no information has been shared. We have registered with the new system but have received no further information. The classes for this system will also be available at our MTCA conferences.

Note: The above-mentioned systems were to be up and running last year, however, the state did not launch either systems.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

The Town Clerks' Office conducted multiple interviews of candidates to fill the third position in FY25, unfortunately unsuccessfully. We did find a qualified candidate to fill the position, however they did not accept the offer due to the

starting salary and vacation time. I plan to re-open the search, truth be told it will be impossible for me to hire, train, learn the new systems and still train my Assistant Town Clerk, Tina Sulda. The position at this time must be filled with someone with work experience in a Town Clerks' Office. The workload has been tremendous, I also expected and budgeted for Deb Bourbeau to return on a part-time schedule to help with Elections and training the new hires, however, she did not return to help. I am grateful to Betty Greemore and Abigail Moore, without their help and support, I would not have made it through the election season without them both!

Also, please keep in mind for Town Meeting:

- New Assistant Town Administrator
- New Town Moderator
- New Town Accountant

January 2025 Town Clerks' Office:

- Our Annual Town Census gets mailed out to over 4892 residents/households. **Up 252 from last year**
- We start to register and license just under 1000 dogs in Montague.
- The Annual Town Election preparation begins with nomination papers, dates calculated, letters sent to current town meeting members and current election officials that their terms are expiring, etc.
- Vital records need to be processed, death, marriage and birth
- The daily foot traffic into the office, online requests, and phone requests
- Special Town Meeting that is tentatively scheduled for February 2025
- Public Records Requests have increased significantly

We have an extraordinarily heavy administrative demand, physical burdens with time sensitive deadlines that force us into a fast work-paced environment, to produce a high-volume turnout that most certainly has led to some errors, the state continues to set deadlines for our office that we must comply with.

In closing the third hire will have to have experience, if this person is the correct fit for the office, I would seriously consider a part-time person as well, this office needs qualified reliable staffing.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? Please list them and share the current status of those expenditures/projects.

Fireproof safes were approved; however, the office move did not go as smoothly as expected. I am still not in the office across the hall. Space is another very important issue for this office along with compliance with the state regarding our Vault(s). I did indicate to the Town Administrator, Walter, that he could take this money back - however I would like to be completely transparent, we are out of room in this office, Vital Records are at risk, Elections are at risk and proper filling of records are at risk. This is a much larger conversation that should be had, I would like to repeat it again, we are out of space, my equipment and records are scattered throughout the building. We no longer have adequate space, we have not for a long time now and it is affecting how we do our job in the office.

General Category : General Government

TOWN CLERK

Dept # 161

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Wages Full Time	169,758	117,343	162,549	59,959.00	165,069		
5113	Board of Registrars (3)	1,875	1,875	1,875	625.00	1,875		
5124	Poll Workers	20,000	11,581	20,000	16,032.50	10,000		
5125	P/T Wages Temp		3,753	500	3,693.92	500		
5132	Overtime		837					
5144	Longevity	300	2,400	1,000	500.00	1,400		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	191,933	137,789	185,924	80,810.42	178,844		-
5247	Software and Storage Support	13,573	15,812	9,500	4,377.17	9,500		
5248	Office Equipment R & M	500		500		500		
5305	Printing/Bookbinding	9,000	6,781	2,000		2,000		
5314	Seminars	300	150	400		400		
5315	Other Professional/Technical	6,700	959	1,500		1,500		
5316	Election Expenses			10,000	5,119.84	4,000		
5317	Census Expenses			8,000	3,858.64	8,000		
5344	Postage	7,400	5,348	3,000	1,055.78	3,000		
5345	Advertising	100	64	250		250		
5346	Elections Postage		2,016	6,000	3,257.97	1,500		
5420	Office Supplies	5,800	3,072	6,000	591.93	6,000		
5430	Food for Pollworkers	900	612	1,300	619.71	450		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	275	40	200	120.00	200		
5599	Clerk Equip < \$2K	4,250	4,525	-		-		
5710	Travel	2,000	512	2,200		2,500		
5730	Dues & Memberships	110	100	200	100.00	250		
5740	Insurance	200		250	105.00	250		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	51,108	39,992	51,300	19,206.04	40,300		-
	TOTAL TOWN CLERK	243,041	177,781	237,224	100,016.46	219,144	219,144	219,144

Change (18,080) -7.62%

There is a four-year election cycle that keeps repeating.

Elections FY

- 3 2023,2027,2031,2035,2039
- 2 2024,2028,2032,2036,2040
- 3 2025,2029,2033,2037,2041
- 1 2026,2030,2034,2038,2042

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Hours	Total Annual
12/8/2014	Town Clerk	G7			77,260.00
	Town Clerk BOR Stipend				900.00
	MGL Ch41:19K Stipend				
2/18/2011	Adj DOH for Longevity/total town service				-
4/9/2012	Assistant Town Clerk	D8	27.29	1,828.50	49,899.77
	Admin Asst	B2	20.24	1,828.50	37,008.84
					165,069

DOH	Svc	Long
\$41,981	FY26	
	15	900
	14	500
	Total	1,400

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111	Wages Full Time	162,549	165,069	2,520	1.55%	Contractual
5113	Registrars	1,875	1,875	-		
5124	Pollworkers	20,000	10,000	(10,000)	-50.00%	Only one election this year
5125	P/T Wages Temp	500	500	-		
5144	Longevity	1,000	1,400	400	40.00%	Contractual
5247	Software and Storage Support	9,500	9,500	-		
5248	Office Equipment R & M	500	500	-		
5279	Custodial Services	-	-	-		
5305	Printing/Bookbinding	2,000	2,000	-		
5314	Seminars	400	400	-		
5315	Other Professional/Technical	1,500	1,500	-		
5316	Election Expenses	10,000	4,000	(6,000)	-60.00%	Only one election this year
5317	Census Expenses	8,000	8,000	-		
5341	Telephone	-	-	-		
5344	Postage	3,000	3,000	-		
5345	Advertising	250	250	-		
5346	Election Postage	6,000	1,500	(4,500)	-75.00%	No Vote by Mail for the local election
5420	Office Supplies	6,000	6,000	-		
5430	Food for Pollworkers	1,300	450	(850)	-65.38%	Only one election this year
5581	Subscriptions/Books	200	200	-		
5599	Clerk Equip < \$2K	-	-	-		
5710	Travel	2,200	2,500	300	13.64%	New State Vitals and Voting Systems (2)
5730	Dues & Memberships	200	250	50	25.00%	Dues increase
5740	Insurance	250	250	-		

Totals 237,224 219,144 (18,080) -7.62%



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Planning & Conservation Department Submitted by: Maureen Pollock, Planning Director

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

The Planning Department is requesting \$543 for a government rated annual subscription for ArcGIS license (see attached quote), in order to help manage and plan future development, assessing environmental impact, infrastructure needs, zoning, and transportation.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

As part of the planning process, the Planning Department, including the RiverCulture Program, provides enhanced community engagement and public outreach in soliciting feedback from our most vulnerable residents (including Environmental Justice populations and other priority populations) to help guide short and long term planning projects. Through grant funding, the Planning Department has successfully "baked" these efforts in as part of the overall project budget. The Planning Department will continue to secure grant funding for these efforts in future projects, as they become available. No funding is requested at this time.

Examples of enhanced community engagement and public outreach include but are not limited to:

- distribute surveys, in English/Spanish (fees apply)
- hold focus groups, interviews, and public forums, in English/Spanish
 - hold events in-person and via Zoom
 - hold smaller events at Town facilities
 - hold bigger events in Great Hall at DCR Discovery Center, with a capacity of 85 people (fees apply)
- provide food/beverages (fees apply)
- provide childcare services (fees apply)
- provide language translation services (fees apply)
- provide raffle prizes (fees apply)
- advertisement in local newspapers (fees apply)

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

N/A

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

In FY 2025, the Conservation Commission received \$10,000 to Supplement to Waidlich Memorial Conservation Fund. The fund was drawn down significantly in 2020 due to the purchase of a 36-acre Agriculture Preservation Restriction. The current balance of \$37,626.80 is likely not enough for another similar scale preservation project. The Conservation Commission's strategy is to build the fund back up to a target goal of \$50,000 through annual appropriations from Town Meeting and/or private donations. The Conservation Commission are requesting \$10,000 for the FY2025 Special Article Request

General Category : General Government

PLANNER

Dept # 175

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Wages Full Time	124,979	124,979	131,288	62,828.00	132,294		
5113	Wages Part Time							
5144	Longevity	300	300	300	300.00	300		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	300	300	300	144.25	300		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	125,579	125,579	131,888	63,272.25	132,894		-
5314	Seminars	1,500	698	1,500	744.62	1,500		
5320	Food	-	188	-		-		
5344	Postage	550	331	550	117.15	550		
5345	Advertising	1,650	1,076	1,650	176.00	1,650		
5350	Citizen Serve - 4 licenses	1,500	1,800	1,500	1,800.00	1,500		
5380	Other Services	1,000	160	1,000	426.69	1,000		
5420	Office Supplies	750	365	750	57.52	750		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	200	214	200		200		
	ArcGIS Annual Subscription			-		600		
5590	Equipment < \$2K	350		350		350		
5710	Travel	900	168	900		900		
5730	Dues & Memberships	450	337	500		500		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	8,850	5,337	8,900	3,321.98	9,500		-
	TOTAL PLANNING	134,429	130,915	140,788	66,594.23	142,394	142,394	142,394

Change 1,606 1.14%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday Staffing

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Hours	Total Annual
1/23/2023	Dir Planning & Comm Dev	G10			82,394.00
7/9/2018	Assistant Planner	D8	27.29	1,828.50	49,899.77

DOH	Svc FY26	Long
	3	
7/9/2018	7	300
	Total	300

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	Change	Change	Explanation
5111	Wages Full Time	131,288	132,294	1,006	0.77%	
5113	Wages Part Time	-	-	-		
5144	Longevity	300	300	-		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	300	300	-		
5314	Seminars	1,500	1,500	-		
5344	Postage	550	550	-		
5345	Advertising	1,650	1,650	-		
5350	Citizen Serve - 2 licenses	1,500	1,500	-		
5380	Other Services	1,000	1,000	-		
5420	Office Supplies	750	750	-		
5490	Food	-	-	-		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	200	200	-		
	ArcGIS Annual Subscription	-	600	600	100.00%	
5590	Equipment < \$2K	350	350	-		
5710	Travel	900	900	-		
5730	Dues & Memberships	500	500	-		
Totals		140,788	142,394	1,606	1.14%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: ZBA Submitted by: William Ketchen

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

There are no notable changes in the ZBA budget for FY26.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

Nothing new has been added. The ZBA continues to work on improving our meetings and there has been a noticeable upgrade in the quality of the meetings.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

There are no challenges for the ZBA based on the FY25 budget.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

The ZBA did not receive any funding for special articles in FY24 or FY25.

General Category : General Government

ZBA

Dept # 176

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5308	Updating Maps	300		300		300		
5314	Seminars	100		100		100		
5344	Postage	150	240	150		150		
5345	Advertising							
5420	Office Supplies	150		150		150		
5730	Dues & Memberships							
TOTAL EXPENSES		700	240	700	-	700		-
TOTAL ZBA		700	240	700	-	700	700	700

Change - 0.00%

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5308	Updating Maps	300	300	-		
5314	Seminars	100	100	-		
5344	Postage	150	150	-		
5345	Advertising	-	-	-		
5420	Office Supplies	150	150	-		
5730	Dues & Memberships	-	-	-		

Totals 700 700 -

General Category: General Government

UTILITIES

Dept # 190

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5211-192	Electricity- Town Hall	28,000	23,492	33,000	14,564.67	33,000		
5211-193	Electricity - 15 Center St	1,300	871	1,000	2,013.62	1,000		
5211-211	Electricity - Police Station	26,000	26,262	25,000	6,519.78	26,750		
5211-422	Electricity- DPW	33,000	36,179	35,000	14,607.00	38,000		
5211-424	Electricity - Traffic lights	5,700	3,832	5,000	1,953.29	5,000		
5211-433	Electricity-Landfill	1,100	917	900	239.06	900		
5211-652	Electricity-Unity Park	3,800	3,074	3,200	1,278.25	3,200		
5213-422	Heating Oil-DPW	34,000	8,797	15,000	2,236.40	15,000		
5214-192	Natural Gas- Town Hall	11,200	7,933	10,000	1,706.34	10,000		
5214-211	Natural Gas - Police Station	784	748	800	311.79	900		
5214-652	Natural Gas-Unity Park	1,848	1,593	1,600	321.75	1,600		
5231-192	Water-Town Hall	600	374	500	157.45	500		
5231-193	Water - 15 Center St	150		150	68.00	150		
5231-211	Water - Police Station	400	456	500	222.00	500		
5231-422	Water-DPW	1,000	1,013	1,300	702.70	1,300		
5231-433	Water-Landfill	-		-		-		
5231-652	Water-Unity Park	275	184	300	272.35	300		
5232-192	Sewer-Town Hall	2,100	1,508	2,100	582.00	2,100		
5232-193	Sewer - 15 Center St	250		100		100		
5232-211	Sewer - Police Station	700	772	900	378.00	900		
5232-422	Sewer-DPW	3,500	1,162	3,500	1,266.00	3,500		
5232-652	Sewer-Unity Park	225	155	200	150.00	300		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	155,932	119,322	140,050	49,550.45	145,000		145,000
	TOTAL PUBLIC BLDG UTILI	155,932	119,322	140,050	49,550.45	145,000	145,000	145,000

Change

4,950

3.53%

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5211-192	Electricity- Town Hall	33,000	33,000	-		
5211-193	Electricity - 15 Center St	1,000	1,000	-		
5211-211	Electricity - Police Station	25,000	26,750	1,750	7.00%	Increased based on current and past usage
5211-422	Electricity- DPW	35,000	38,000	3,000	8.57%	Increased based on current and past usage
5211-424	Electricity - Traffic lights	5,000	5,000	-		
5211-433	Electricity-Landfill	900	900	-		
5211-652	Electricity-Unity Park	3,200	3,200	-		
5213-422	Heating Oil-DPW	15,000	15,000	-		
5214-192	Natural Gas- Town Hall	10,000	10,000	-		
5214-211	Natural Gas - Police Station	800	900	100	12.50%	Increased based on current and past usage
5214-652	Natural Gas-Unity Park	1,600	1,600	-		
5231-192	Water-Town Hall	500	500	-		
5231-193	Water - 15 Center St	150	150	-		
5231-194	Water - Shea	-	-	-		
5231-211	Water - Police Station	500	500	-		
5231-422	Water-DPW	1,300	1,300	-		
5231-433	Water-Landfill	-	-	-		
5231-652	Water-Unity Park	300	300	-		
5232-192	Sewer-Town Hall	2,100	2,100	-		
5232-193	Sewer - 15 Center St	100	100	-		
5232-211	Sewer - Police Station	900	900	-		
5232-422	Sewer-DPW	3,500	3,500	-		
5232-541	Sewer - 62 5th St	-	-	-		
5232-652	Sewer-Unity Park	200	300	100	50.00%	Increased based on current and past usage
Totals		140,050	145,000	4,950	3.53%	

General Category: General Government

Farmers Market

Dept # 197

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5100	Coordinator Stipend	4,000	4,000	4,000	1,777.80	3,750		
	Assistant Coordinator Stipend					750		
	TOTAL WAGES	-	-	4,000	1,778	4,500		
5700	Misc Expenses	1,000	606	1,200	910.67	1,200		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	1,000	606	1,200	910.67	1,200		-
	TOTAL MEDIC	1,000	606	5,200	2,688.47	5,700	5,700	5,700
				Change		500	9.62%	

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5100	Coordinator Stipend	4,000	3,750.00	(250)	-6.25%	
	Assistant Coordinator Stipend	-	750.00	750	100.00%	New position to fill in once per month
5700	Misc Exp	1,200	1,200	-		

Totals 5,200 5,700 500 9.62%



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Police Submitted by: Chris Williams

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

There are no notable increases for FY26. The noticeable short fall in wages is the fact we are down (3) officers. I am currently in the process of hiring (2) new patrol officers that will have to go to the academy in January 2025.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

N/A

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

We are currently down (3) officers. Overtime is being used to fill limited open shifts. I did not budget for academy costs this year. (At the time I did not realize we would be in the position we are in) I currently have one officer signed up for the police academy and I am hoping that I can get the second officer in next week. The tuition is \$3,200 per officer and equipment/uniforms for the academy will be between \$3-4,000 per officer. The academy starts on 1/21/2025 and graduation is 6/20/2025. My overall budget is pretty healthy and I should be able to aboard these costs. If not I will need a reserve fund transfer.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

N/A

General Category: Public Safety

POLICE

Dept # 211

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5112	Wages Full Time	1,265,672	1,238,648	1,308,691	573,220.29	1,277,065		
5113	P/T Wages Custodial	15,998	15,311	16,805	7,732.50	16,805		
5114	P/T Wages	16,000	5,455	20,000	2,694.05	15,000		
5132	F/T Wages O/T	145,000	125,034	150,000	86,433.62	150,000		
5135	Court Time	8,000	1,941	8,000		5,000		
5141	Educational Incentive Pay	131,449	130,163	146,941	67,446.42	163,599		
5142	Shift Differential	20,000	18,448	20,000	8,090.64	20,000		
5143	Paid Holidays	72,095	66,726	73,000	26,780.16	73,000		
5144	Longevity	700	700	1,000		1,300		
5145	Cell Phone Stipends	4,280	4,310	4,280	1,909.87	4,280		
5147	K-9 Stipends	4,000	3,982	4,000	1,893.12	4,000		
5148	On-Call Detective Stipend	1,500	1,500	1,500	715.14	1,500		
5149	IT Administrator Stipend	3,000	3,000	6,000		6,000		
5151	111F Regular Wages		7,120					
5152	111F Incentive Pay		1,780					
5153	111F Holiday Pay							
5191	Fitness Stipend	8,000	5,000	8,000		8,000		
5193	Vacation/Sick Leave Buyback	-	9,830	4,410	6,557.41	4,800		
5195	Training	45,000	27,847	52,000	11,551.56	45,000		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	1,740,694	1,666,797	1,824,627	795,024.78	1,795,349	1,795,349	1,795,349
5242	Building R & M	1,750	2,091	1,750		1,750		
5247	Leases/Support/Contracts	31,900	33,164	35,500	31,857.05	40,500		
5250	Equipment R & M	15,500	17,940	16,000	7,732.20	18,000		
5260	Generator Maintenance & Fuel	1,360	660	1,360	330.00	1,360		
5314	Seminars/Training	6,000	6,729	6,000	1,367.00	6,800		
5315	Police Academy Expenses	-	679	-		17,000		
5318	Meals For Prisoners	300		100	30.00	100		
5319	Dry Cleaning	300	30	150		150		
5341	Telephone	12,000	11,263	12,956	5,135.59	12,956		
5344	Postage	550	300	550	200.00	550		
5345	Advertising	500	1,736	750		750		
5350	Other Services	2,100		2,100	885.00	2,100		
5451	Cleaning Supplies	500	267	500		500		
5480	Vehicle Supplies & Maintenance	30,000	26,807	32,000	12,428.25	32,000		

General Category: Public Safety

POLICE

Dept # 211

		Budget	Actual	Budget	Expended	FY26	FY26	FY26
EXPENDITURES		FY24	FY24	FY25	thru	Level	BOS	BOS &
					12/31/2024	Services	Recommend	Fin Comm
						Request		Recommend
5481	Gasoline	34,000	29,762	34,000	12,473.12	34,000		
5580	Other Supplies	17,000	15,528	17,500	5,473.34	17,500		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	600	827	750		900		
5582	Uniforms/Clothing	22,200	19,713	24,000	6,099.36	24,000		
5585	Ammunition	6,100	6,329	6,350	4,437.49	7,000		
5710	Travel	2,500	3,494	2,500	814.62	3,500		
5730	Dues & Memberships	2,700	3,598	3,165	1,130.00	3,700		
5740	Insurance	41,500	42,914	45,000	47,053.00	49,500		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	229,360	223,832	242,981	137,446.02	274,616	274,616	274,616
5800	Cruiser	68,100	62,683	60,000		-		-
	TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	68,100	62,683	60,000	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	2,038,154	1,953,312	2,127,608	932,470.80	2,069,965	2,069,965	2,069,965
Change						(57,643)	-2.71%	

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Hours Days/Hrs	Total Annual	Incent %	Annual Incentive
9/25/1995	Chief Note: per contract, not schedule	I10*			115,764.00	20%	23,152.80
6/27/2005	Lieutenant	G+8.5%/10	45.44	2,088	94,878.72	25%	23,719.68
2/17/2008	Staff Sgt	SS5	42.58	1,975	84,095.50	25%	21,023.88
6/5/2017	Sgt	S5	38.34	1,975	75,721.50	20%	15,144.30
11/29/2012	Sgt	S5	38.34	1,975	75,721.50		-
1/12/2012	Sgt	S5	38.34	1,975	75,721.50	10%	7,572.15
6/2/2019	Sgt	S5	38.34	1,975	75,721.50		
7/1/2014	Detective	D8	35.97	1,975	71,040.75	10%	7,104.08
12/5/2022	Detective	D8	35.97	1,975	71,040.75	20%	14,208.15
2/4/2001	Patrolman	P8	33.16	1,975	65,491.00		-
8/17/2004	Patrolman	P8	33.16	1,975	65,491.00		-
8/16/2004	K9 Patrolman	P8	33.16	1,975	65,491.00	20%	13,098.20
4/2/2017	Patrolman	P1	25.20	1,975	49,770.00	10%	4,977.00
10/18/2015	Patrolman	P8	33.16	1,975	65,491.00		-
1/5/2025	Patrolman	P1	25.20	1,975	49,770.00	20%	9,954.00
7/18/2018	Patrolman	P8	33.16	1,975	65,491.00	10%	6,549.10
11/1/2020	Patrolman	P6	30.68	1,975	60,593.00	20%	12,118.60
1/6/2025	Patrolman	P1	25.20	1,975	49,770.00	10%	4,977.00
3/31/2015	Custodian (NAGE)	A10	20.62	815	16,805.30		
							163,598.93

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5112	Wages Full Time	1,308,691	1,277,065	(31,626)	-2.42%	Down 2 officer, new hires, lower rate of pay
5113	P/T Wages Custodial	16,805	16,805	-		
5114	P/T Wages	20,000	15,000	(5,000)	-25.00%	
5132	F/T Wages O/T	150,000	150,000	-		
5135	Court Time	8,000	5,000	(3,000)	-37.50%	
5141	Educational Incentive Pay	146,941	163,599	16,658	11.34%	Per Contract
5142	Shift Differential	20,000	20,000	-		
5143	Paid Holidays	73,000	73,000	-		
5144	Longevity	1,000	1,300	300	30.00%	Per Contract
5145	Cell Phone Stipends	4,280	4,280	-		
5147	K-9 Stipends	4,000	4,000	-		
5148	On-Call Detective Stipend	1,500	1,500	-		
5149	IT Administrator Stipend	6,000	6,000	-		
5151	111F Regular Wages	-	-	-		
5152	111F Incentive Pay	-	-	-		
5153	111F Holiday Pay	-	-	-		
5191	Fitness Stipend	8,000	8,000	-		
5193	Vacation/Sick Leave Buyback	4,410	4,800	390	8.84%	Cost per contracts
5195	Training	52,000	45,000	(7,000)	-13.46%	
5242	Building R & M	1,750	1,750	-		
5247	Leases/Support/Contracts	35,500	40,500	5,000	14.08%	
5250	Equipment R & M	16,000	18,000	2,000	12.50%	
5260	Generator Maintenance & Fuel	1,360	1,360	-		
5314	Seminars/Training	6,000	6,800	800	13.33%	
5315	Police Academy Expenses	-	17,000	17,000	100.00%	
5318	Meals For Prisoners	100	100	-		
5319	Dry Cleaning	150	150	-		
5341	Telephone	12,956	12,956	-		
5344	Postage	550	550	-		
5345	Advertising	750	750	-		
5350	Other Services	2,100	2,100	-		
5451	Cleaning Supplies	500	500	-		
5480	Vehicle Supplies & Maintenance	32,000	32,000	-		
5481	Gasoline	34,000	34,000	-		
5501	Drug Investigation	-	-	-		
5580	Other Supplies	17,500	17,500	-		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	750	900	150	20.00%	
5582	Uniforms/Clothing	24,000	24,000	-		
5585	Ammunition	6,350	7,000	650	10.24%	
5710	Travel/Seminars	2,500	3,500	1,000	40.00%	
5730	Dues & Memberships	3,165	3,700	535	16.90%	
5740	Insurance	45,000	49,500	4,500	10.00%	
5800	Cruiser	60,000	-	(60,000)	-100.00%	New K-9 Cruiser

Totals 2,127,608 2,069,965 (57,643) -2.71%

General Category: Public Safety

DISPATCH

Dept #212

		Budget	Actual	Budget	Expended thru	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
EXPENDITURES		FY24	FY24	FY25	12/31/2024			
5112	Wages Full Time	316,466	310,362	328,068	139,297.75	328,068		
5114	Wages Part Time	17,000	8,300	17,000	17,300.00	17,000		
5132	F/T Wages O/T	32,000	30,217	33,500	16,993.13	33,500		
5142	Shift Differential	3,622	5,545	5,300	2,455.38	5,300		
5143	Paid Holidays	22,000	18,142	22,000	6,306.32	22,000		
5144	Longevity	1,200	1,200	1,500	1,500.00	1,600		
5145	Cell phone stipend	300	300	300	144.25	300		
5193	Unused Vacation Buy Back							
5195	Training	1,500	278	1,500		1,500		
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES		394,088	374,344	409,168	183,996.83	409,268	-	-
5314	Seminars	1,000	873	1,000		1,000		
5710	Travel	500	343	600		600		
TOTAL EXPENSES		1,500	1,216	1,600	-	1,600	1,600	-
TOTAL DISPATCH		395,588	375,560	410,768	183,996.83	410,868	410,868	410,868
Change						100	0.02%	

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hrly Rate	Rate #1 Hrs	Total Annual	DOH	Svc FY26	Long
	Full-Time							
7/11/2005	Dispatch Supervisor/Office Adm	E10	30.77	2,088	64,247.76	7/11/2005	20	\$1,000
9/30/24	Communications Officer F/T	D1	23.17	1,975	45,760.75	9/30/24		
11/1/19	Communications Officer F/T	D9	27.81	1,975	54,924.75	11/1/19	6	\$300
8/22/16	Communications Officer F/T	D10	28.51	1,975	56,307.25	8/22/16	9	\$300
11/3/2021	Communications Officer F/T	D10	28.51	1,975	56,307.25	11/13/21	4	
10/2/2022	Communications Officer F/T	D4	24.94	1,975	49,256.50	10/2/2022	3	

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5112 Wages Full Time	328,068	328,068	-		
5114 Wages Part Time	17,000	17,000	-		
5132 F/T Wages O/T	33,500	33,500	-		
5142 Shift Differential	5,300	5,300	-		
5143 Paid Holidays	22,000	22,000	-		
5144 Longevity	1,500	1,600	100	6.67%	Per Contract
5145 Cell phone stipend	300	300	-		
5146 TFFD Shift	-	-	-		
5193 Unused Vacation Buy Back	-	-	-		
5195 Training	1,500	1,500	-		
5310 EMD Services - MedCare	-	-	-		
5314 Seminars	1,000	1,000	-		
5710 Travel	600	600	-		

Totals

410,768

410,868

100

0.02%



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Building Submitted by: William Ketchen

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

There are no notable changes to the FY26 Budget request.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

The Building Department continues to fine tune our online permitting software to enhance customer service.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

There currently are no challenges for the Building Department based on the FY25 budget.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

The Building Department did not receive any funding for special articles in FY24 or FY25.

General Category: Public Safety

BUILDING DEPT

Dept # 241

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Salaries Full Time	113,851	113,011	118,712	53,196.75	114,656		
5124	P/T Wages Temp							
5140	P/T Wages Building Inspector	1,150	405	1,150	210.00	1,150		
5141	P/T Wages Gas Inspector	3,900	1,645	3,900	810.00	3,900		
5142	P/T Wages Plumbing Inspector	3,900	1,645	3,900	1,665.00	3,900		
5143	P/T Wages Electrical Inspector	10,750	7,385	10,750	4,950.00	10,750		
5144	Longevity	1,000	1,000	1,100		-		
5145	Cell Phone Stipends	300	300	300	144.25	300		
5146	Hearing Officer	2,500		2,500		2,500		
5193	Vacation BuyBack		4,981					
5194	Sick Leave BuyBack		3,500					
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	137,351	133,872	142,312	60,976.00	137,156		137,156
5314	Seminars	1,000	810	1,000	850.00	1,000		
5341	Telephone/Ipad service	960	369	960		960		
5344	Postage	150	137	150	195.47	150		
5345	Advertising		128					
5350	Citizen Serve 4 licenses-4 for FY25	4,500	5,400	6,000	7,200.00	6,000		
5420	Office Supplies	900	1,069	900	89.24	900		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	800		800		800		
5710	In-State Travel	2,800	1,127	2,800		2,800		
5730	Dues & Memberships	160	160	160		160		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	11,270	9,200	12,770	8,334.71	12,770		12,770
	TOTAL BUILDING INSPECTOR	148,621	143,072	155,082	69,310.71	149,926	149,926	149,926

Change (5,156) -3.32%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Rate #2 Hours	Total Annual	DOH	Svc FY26	Long
6/7/2021	Building Inspector	G6			75,746.00	6/7/2021	5	300.00
4/8/2024	Building Admin Asst	B4	21.28	1,828.50	38,910.48	4/8/2024	2	-

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111	Salaries Full Time	118,712	114,656	(4,056)	-3.42%	
5124	P/T Wages Temp	-	-	-		
5140	P/T Wages Building Inspector	1,150	1,150	-		
5141	P/T Wages Gas Inspector	3,900	3,900	-		
5142	P/T Wages Plumbing Inspector	3,900	3,900	-		
5143	P/T Wages Electrical Inspector	10,750	10,750	-		
5144	Longevity	1,100	-	(1,100)	-100.00%	
5145	Cell Phone Stipends	300	300	-		
5146	Hearing Officer	2,500	2,500	-		
5314	Seminars	1,000	1,000	-		
5341	Telephone/Ipad service	960	960	-		
5344	Postage	150	150	-		
5345	Advertising	-	-	-		
5350	Citizen Serve 4 licenses	6,000	6,000	-		
5420	Office Supplies	900	900	-		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	800	800	-		
5590	2 Ipads	-	-	-		
5710	In-State Travel	2,800	2,800	-		
5730	Dues & Memberships	160	160	-		
Totals		155,082	149,926	(5,156)	-3.32%	

General Category: Public Safety

SEALER OF WEIGHTS

Dept # 244

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5380	Professional/Technical	7,182	7,182	7,182		7,182		
TOTAL EXPENSES		7,182	7,182	7,182	-	7,182		-
TOTAL SEALER OF WEIGHTS		7,182	7,182	7,182	-	7,182	7,182	7,182

Change - 0.00%

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5380	Professional/Technical	7,182	7,182	-		

Totals 7,182 7,182 -

General Category: Public Safety

EMERGENCY MGMT

Dept # 291

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5113	Stipend - EM Director	5,765	5,765	6,444	3,222.00	6,444		
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES		5,765	5,765	6,444	3,222.00	6,444		-
5420	Supplies	500	1	500		500		
TOTAL EXPENSES		500	1	500	-	500		-
TOTAL EMERGENCY MGMT		6,265	5,766	6,944	3,222.00	6,944	6,944	6,944
Change						-	0.00%	

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5113 P/T Salaries - EM Director	\$6,444	6,444	-		
5420 Supplies	500	500.00			
Totals	6,944	6,944	-		

General Category: Public Safety

FOREST WARDEN

Dept # 294

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5114	P/T Wages Forest Warden	1,710	1,710	1,882	-	1,882		
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES		1,710	1,710	1,882	-	1,882		-
TOTAL		1,710	1,710	1,882	-	1,882	1,882	1,882

Change - 0.00%

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5114	P/T Wages Forest Warden	1,882	1,882.00	-		

Totals 1,882 1,882 -

General Category: Public Safety

TREE WARDEN

Dept # 299

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5115	Elected Officials	1,575	1,575	1,764	588.00	1,764		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	1,575	1,575	1,764	588.00	1,764		-
5253	Tree Removal & Trimming	27,000	23,104	27,000	11,433.92	27,000		
5344	Postage	100		100		100		
5345	Advertising	500		500		500		
5588	Trees and related supplies	1,000	3,634	1,000		1,000		
5730	Dues and Memberships	110		110		110		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	28,710	26,738	28,710	11,433.92	28,710		-
	TOTAL TREE WARDEN	30,285	28,313	30,474	12,021.92	30,474	30,474	30,474

Change - 0.00%

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5115 Elected Officials	1,764	1,764	-		
5253 Tree Removal	27,000	27,000	-		
5344 Postage	100	100	-		
5345 Advertising	500	500	-		
5588 Trees and related supplies	1,000	1,000	-		
5730 Dues and Memberships	110	110	-		

Totals 30,474 30,474 -

General Category

EDUCATION

Dept # 300

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5321	Franklin Cty Tech School	1,053,018	1,053,017	837,356	431,516.04	841,660		
	TOTAL FRANKLIN TECH	1,053,018	1,053,017	837,356	431,516.04	841,660	841,660	841,660
5322-003	GMRSD	11,809,191	11,809,191	12,143,442	6,071,721.00	12,663,178		
	TOTAL GILL-MONTAGUE	11,809,191	11,809,191	12,143,442	6,071,721.00	12,663,178	12,663,178	12,663,178
	TOTAL EDUCATION	12,862,209	12,862,208	12,980,798	6,503,237.04	13,504,838	13,504,838	13,504,838
Change						524,040	4.04%	

Gill-Montague Regional School District FY26 Budget Proposal

[Back to Links Page](#)

GMRSD has developed an FY26 budget based upon Montague's affordable assessment. The total all funds budget for FY26 represents a 4.2% increase, totaling \$28,822,940.

Montague	Enrollment %	Total Operating Assess.	Operating Assess. Increase	% Increase	Share of HS Debt	Debt Assess.	Total Operating & Debt Assess.	% incr from prior year
FY22	88.02%	10,773,745	228,368	2.2%	89.70%	177,109	10,950,854	2.04%
FY23	88.24%	11,227,134	453,389	4.2%	92.20%	114,333	11,341,467	3.60%
FY24	89.80%	11,698,714	471,580	4.2%	92.62%	110,477	11,809,191	4.10%
FY25	89.41%	12,036,367	337,653	2.9%	93.47%	107,075	12,143,442	2.83%
FY26	87.26%	12,562,089	525,722	4.4%	92.04%	101,088	12,663,177	4.28%

Number to Vote

FY26 REVENUE SOURCES	FY25 Approved	FY26 Proposed	Change
Chapter 70 State Aid	\$ 7,863,011	\$ 8,001,123	\$ 138,112
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -
Medicaid Contra Revenue	\$ (47,000)	\$ (47,000)	\$ -
Interest income	\$ 132,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 28,000
Excess & Deficiency	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ -
Erving Tuition	\$ 980,000	\$ 890,000	\$ (90,000)
E-Rate Reimbursement		\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000
Charter Reimbursement	\$ 156,500	\$ 200,000	\$ 43,500
Chapter 71 Transportation Reimb	\$ 451,800	\$ 468,000	\$ 16,200
Total Operating Assessment	\$ 13,798,013	\$ 14,547,900	\$ 749,887
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET (NO CAPITAL DEBT)	\$ 23,934,324	\$ 24,844,023	\$ 909,699
Capital Assessment (HS Debt)	\$ 114,555	\$ 109,830	\$ (4,725)
CAPITAL DEBT ASSESSMENT (Sheffield Windows)			\$ -
TOTAL OPERATING & CAPITAL BUDGET	\$ 24,048,879	\$ 24,953,853	\$ 904,974
Grants & Revolving Accounts	\$ 1,722,438	\$ 1,754,998	\$ 32,560
Transportation Revolving	\$ 300,000	\$ 100,000	\$ (200,000)
ESSER Grant Funds	\$ 210,000	\$ -	\$ (210,000)
Circuit Breaker Revolving	\$ 210,000	\$ 367,000	\$ 157,000
School Choice Revolving	\$ 1,176,061	\$ 1,167,089	\$ (8,972)
Rural Aid		\$ 480,000	\$ 480,000
TOTAL ALL FUNDS BUDGET	\$ 27,667,378	\$ 28,822,940	\$ 1,155,562
OVERALL BUDGET % INCREASE			4.2%

Expense Summary	FY26 General Fund	FY26 Circuit Breaker	FY26 Sch Choice Revolving	FY26 Rural	FY26 Grants/Revolving	FY26 All Funds
Administration (1000)	745,596	-	-	-	-	745,596
Instructional (2000)	11,753,419	-	945,597	63,871	529,601	13,292,488
Student Services (3000)	1,576,989	-	66,201	-	1,020,000	2,663,190
Operations (4000)	2,243,948	-	72,791	-	-	2,316,739
Benefits & Insurance (5000)	5,637,857	-	-	390,000	36,637	6,064,494
Community Programs (6000)	1,400	-	-	26,129	-	27,529
Tuition (9000)	2,884,814	367,000	82,500	-	268,760	3,603,074
Capital Debt (8000)	109,830	-	-	-	-	109,830
TOTAL BUDGET	24,953,853	367,000	1,167,089	480,000	1,854,998	28,822,940

Educational Highlights

- Innovation Pathways program has an enrollment of 37 Turners Falls High School students, up from 14 in prior year
- Elementary Math, Reading and Science Family Nights
- Maintained Elementary Math Interventionists
- National Honor Society inducted 23 new members in bilingual ceremony with 8 inductees of EL students
- Ricky Pareja earned The Commonwealth Seal of Biliteracy, with Distinction
- Addition of weekly positive student recognition and celebration program at elementary schools
- 14 students selected to participate in Western Mass Junior & Senior Music Festival
- Addition of Cross-Country Program
- Varsity Softball Clinched State Title in FY24

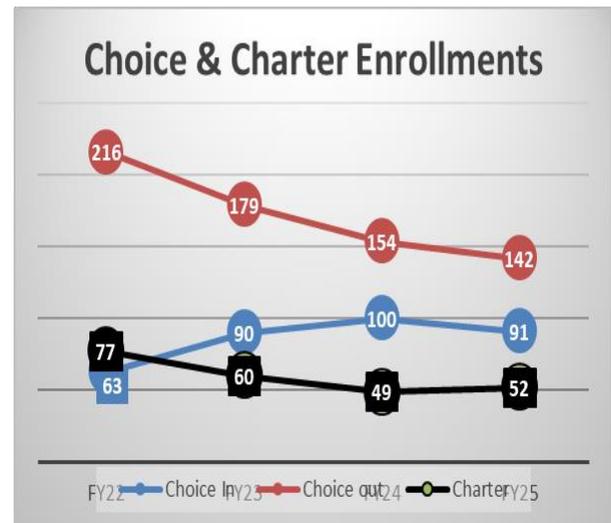
FY26 Revenue/Expense

- Gill-Montague received a minimal Chapter 70 increase due to the decline in Foundation Enrollment
- Choice & Charter enrollments and expenses remain relatively flat
- Generosity from our towns in the form of Town Assessment increases
- Increase in Rural Aid due to our enrollment decline pushing us into Priority 2 of the funding calculation
- Continuation of many of the former ESSER positions
- Elimination of three positions to balance budget: Instructional Assistant, Curriculum Director and SRO

Enrollment Trends

While our Foundation Enrollment declined again this year, it dropped us into Priority 2 for rural aid increasing our Rural aid. Our choice out continues to trend in the right direction while Choice in and Charter out are relatively flat.

YEAR	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Foundation Enrollment	1020	947	938	916
District Enrollment	842	866	917	862
YEAR	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Gill Enrollment	115	105	114	111
Hillcrest Enrollment	145	152	137	122
Sheffield Enrollment	207	210	215	199
Middle School Enrollment	191	206	239	228
TFHS Enrollment	184	193	202	202
Year	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Choice In	63	90	100	91
Choice out	216	179	154	142
YEAR	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Charter	77	60	49	52



**APPENDIX L
ASSESSMENT TO TOWNS**

TOWN	Oct21	Oct22	Oct23	Oct24	Min. Cont.	Reg.	E&D Credit		Assessment		
						Trans (Net of State Aid)	Above Net School Spending	Totals	FY 25 ASSESS	FY 26 ASSESS	Per Pupil
BERNARDSTON	26	25	30	25	\$324,543	\$16,755	\$18,659	(\$27,801)	\$378,146	\$332,157	\$13,286
BUCKLAND	18	17	18	24	\$297,443	\$16,085	\$17,913	(\$26,689)	\$223,916	\$304,752	\$12,698
COLRAIN	27	21	23	29	\$343,521	\$19,436	\$21,644	(\$32,249)	\$310,042	\$352,353	\$12,150
CONWAY	10	9	7	8	\$149,643	\$5,362	\$5,971	(\$8,896)	\$132,002	\$152,079	\$19,010
DEERFIELD	29	25	35	32	\$598,574	\$21,447	\$23,884	(\$35,585)	\$660,007	\$608,319	\$19,010
ERVING	28	28	27	31	\$579,868	\$20,776	\$23,137	(\$34,473)	\$497,816	\$589,309	\$19,010
GILL	17	15	13	16	\$214,985	\$10,723	\$11,942	(\$17,792)	\$200,716	\$219,858	\$13,741
GREENFIELD	122	117	132	135	\$1,304,647	\$90,478	\$100,759	(\$150,123)	\$1,293,286	\$1,345,760	\$9,969
HEATH	9	8	11	13	\$111,595	\$8,713	\$9,703	(\$14,456)	\$95,578	\$115,554	\$8,889
LEYDEN	0	1	4	10	\$119,373	\$6,702	\$7,464	(\$11,120)	\$52,373	\$122,418	\$12,242
MONTAGUE	93	93	74	73	\$792,831	\$48,925	\$54,484	(\$81,178)	\$811,679	\$815,063	\$11,165
NEW SALEM	13	11	14	12	\$177,205	\$8,042	\$8,956	(\$13,344)	\$207,656	\$180,860	\$15,072
NORTHFIELD	28	40	40	50	\$885,944	\$33,510	\$37,318	(\$55,601)	\$715,827	\$901,171	\$18,023
ORANGE	82	95	93	88	\$538,258	\$58,978	\$65,680	(\$97,858)	\$606,065	\$565,058	\$6,421
SHELBURNE	11	9	10	11	\$193,137	\$7,372	\$8,210	(\$12,232)	\$174,392	\$196,487	\$17,862
SUNDERLAND	6	9	9	9	\$166,925	\$6,032	\$6,717	(\$10,008)	\$166,382	\$169,666	\$18,852
WARWICK	7	6	5	5	\$93,527	\$3,351	\$3,732	(\$5,560)	\$82,328	\$95,050	\$19,010
WENDELL	7	9	8	6	\$54,946	\$4,021	\$4,478	(\$6,672)	\$72,403	\$56,773	\$9,462
WHATELY	13	22	18	14	\$254,005	\$9,383	\$10,449	(\$15,568)	\$315,552	\$258,269	\$18,448
TOTAL	546	560	571	591	\$7,200,970	\$396,092	\$441,099	(\$657,206.00)	\$6,996,166	\$7,380,955	\$12,489

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Capital Assessments to Towns FY26 Windows, Doors, Paving, & Roof project (2015) (9-year of 15-year Bond)

Town	US Census Population 2020	Population Rate of Total District Pop.	Equalized Valuation 2022	E.V. Rate to Total District Equalized Val.	Capital Assess Rate (Pop. Rate + EV Rate)	Capital Assess
BERNARDSTON	2102	3.30%	\$336,001,100	3.18%	3.24%	\$6,736.16
BUCKLAND	1816	2.85%	\$301,585,500	2.86%	2.86%	\$5,930.87
COLRAIN	1606	2.52%	\$226,340,100	2.15%	2.33%	\$4,847.65
CONWAY	1761	2.77%	\$361,484,500	3.43%	3.10%	\$6,430.77
DEERFIELD	5090	7.99%	\$1,072,783,700	10.17%	9.08%	\$18,862.64
ERVING	1665	2.61%	\$888,586,800	8.42%	5.52%	\$11,462.72
GILL	1551	2.44%	\$218,896,700	2.07%	2.26%	\$4,684.66
GREENFIELD	17768	27.91%	\$2,226,295,800	21.10%	24.50%	\$50,899.26
HEATH	723	1.14%	\$125,842,500	1.19%	1.16%	\$2,418.07
LEYDEN	734	1.15%	\$124,635,700	1.18%	1.17%	\$2,424.13
MONTAGUE	8580	13.48%	\$1,280,098,500	12.13%	12.80%	\$26,596.13
NEW SALEM	983	1.54%	\$177,513,700	1.68%	1.61%	\$3,350.80
NORTHFIELD	2866	4.50%	\$689,983,900	6.54%	5.52%	\$11,466.81
ORANGE	7569	11.89%	\$876,477,100	8.31%	10.10%	\$20,973.96
SHELBURNE	1884	2.96%	\$355,710,200	3.37%	3.17%	\$6,574.57
SUNDERLAND	3663	5.75%	\$648,868,700	6.15%	5.95%	\$12,362.14
WARWICK	780	1.23%	\$126,808,400	1.20%	1.21%	\$2,520.56
WENDELL	924	1.45%	\$137,073,900	1.30%	1.38%	\$2,856.49
WHATELY	1607	2.52%	\$376,116,400	3.56%	3.04%	\$6,323.60
TOTAL	63672	100.00%	\$10,551,103,200	100.00%	100.00%	\$207,720.00



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: DPW Submitted by: Sam Urkiel 12/5/2024

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

Avenue A streetscape maintenance has been improved with the block grant construction projects. It has been requested by the to increase this item to \$20,000 from \$4,000. The additional funds will be used to rehab a planter block or two annually and provide better attention with hired gardeners to maintain the aesthetic appeal of the downtown.

Line painting cost has increased by 25% which is bid by FRCOG. This increases the expenditure from \$40,000 to \$50,000. Streets on the paving list are skipped and done after paving is completed.

An adjustment of \$20,000 from sand to salt in the snow and ice budget is reflected due to the treatment approach. We are using more salt than sand to keep the roads safe for residents. More salt also reduces spring sweeping and cleanup. The last few years the Snow and Ice pager has been out for an additional 2 weeks. I'm requesting an increase of \$3,500 to that item.

All contracted trash and recycling disposal with Casella is increasing by 5% for a total of \$32,150.

Other increases are due to contractual obligations, estimated step / cola wages or small adjustments to reflect the actual spending of that line item.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

We completed the replacement of S Ferry Rd Culvert. Some paving work with our own equipment was completed this fall along with some sidewalk replacement. More to be completed this spring.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

We are aligned well with the budget and should continue to follow the goals and expectations set. Pricing and delivery of products have finally leveled off easing the strain.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

DPW Discretionary – Loader Repair estimated at \$10K-20K

S Ferry Rd Culvert – Work completed, finalizing expenditures

20 Ton trailer – Purchased and delivered

10 Wheel Dump Truck – Truck is being built, expected delivery May-June 2025

Pave 1st Street alley – Work to be completed spring 2025

General Category: Public Works

DPW COMBINED

Dept # 420

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5112 F/T Wages	1,086,741	924,517	1,112,515	506,365.60	1,127,803	-	-
5124 Part Time Temp Wages	39,700	10,278	21,600	3,432.00	23,040	-	-
5132 F/T Wages OT	25,000	24,282	25,000	15,002.11	30,000	-	-
5142 Shift Differential	16,975	17,702	16,975	10,477.75	16,975	-	-
5144 Longevity	4,700	4,400	4,700	900.00	4,600	-	-
5144 Cell Phone Stipends	1,525	1,200	1,801	548.15	1,801	-	-
5193 Vacation Buy Back	-	11,847	-	-	-	-	-
5194 Sick Leave Buy Back	-	3,500	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	1,174,641	997,725	1,182,591	536,725.61	1,204,219	1,204,219	1,204,219
5241 Siemens annual monitoring	3,000	2,907	3,000	2,994.00	3,200	-	-
5242 Buildings R & M	25,100	29,940	25,100	9,870.25	25,100	-	-
5243 HVAC R & M	25,000	37,943	25,000	1,559.75	25,000	-	-
5245 Vehicles R & M	35,000	26,785	35,000	15,271.44	35,000	-	-
5247 Computer R & M/Support	2,000	-	2,000	-	2,000	-	-
5251 Other Equipment R & M	10,000	20,095	10,000	3,541.98	10,000	-	-
5277 Rental/Lease Vehicles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5278 Uniform Rental/Cleaning	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5310 DOT Testing	5,000	6,463	5,000	6,128.60	7,500	-	-
5314 Seminars	1,000	2,625	1,000	-	2,500	-	-
5315 Other Professional & Technical	22,000	18,440	22,000	3,895.00	22,000	-	-
5320 Street Line Painting	28,000	40,691	40,000	46,144.89	50,000	-	-
5341 Telephone/Internet/Pagers	3,000	4,110	3,500	2,121.42	4,200	-	-
5344 Postage	100	99	100	108.67	100	-	-
5345 Advertising	2,500	2,844	2,500	166.79	2,500	-	-
5420 Office Supplies	3,500	4,332	3,500	3,094.15	3,500	-	-
5430 Building R & M Supplies	5,500	181	5,500	1,407.85	5,500	-	-
5432 Electrical	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5435 Hand Tools	5,000	15,306	5,000	1,609.71	5,000	-	-
5440 Oil & Lubricants	10,000	10,243	10,000	4,839.45	10,000	-	-
5443 Misc. Parts & Accessories	70,500	139,008	70,500	45,783.90	70,500	-	-
5450 Streetscape Maintenance			4,000	1,925.00	4,000		
5451 Cleaning Supplies	8,500	7,114	8,500	5,180.47	8,500	-	-
5460 Groundskeeping Supplies	3,000	3,428	3,000	340.85	3,000	-	-
5481 Gasoline	63,140	24,095	63,140	11,798.65	63,140	-	-
5482 Diesel	67,200	37,212	67,200	13,756.00	67,200	-	-

General Category: Public Works

DPW COMBINED

Dept # 420

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5484	Vehicle Parts & Accessories	85,000	76,501	85,000	47,082.84	85,000	-	-
5500	Medical Supplies	200	546	250	156.19	500	-	-
5530	Public Works Supplies	71,500	127,610	71,500	42,108.53	71,500	-	-
5534	Sidewalk Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5580	Equipment < \$5K	-	34,434	-	-	-	-	-
5582	Uniforms/Clothing	15,500	16,101	15,500	5,439.05	15,500	-	-
5588	Trees	500	-	500	-	500	-	-
5710	Travel	125	296	125	-	125	-	-
5730	Dues/Memberships	500	381	500	256.00	500	-	-
5783	Hoister & Other Licenses	1,500	2,551	1,500	629.18	3,000	-	-
	CARES Ineligible Exp							
	TOTAL EXPENSES	572,865	692,280	589,415	277,210.61	606,065	606,065	606,065
5800	Flail Mower Lease FY18-22/FY23 Boiler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	1,747,506	1,690,005	1,772,006	813,936.22	1,810,284	1,810,284	1,810,284

Change

38,279

2.16%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	NAGE Scale Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Rate #2 Hours	Total Annual	Longevity	DOH	Yrs FY26
7/29/2024	Superintendent	H7			98,687.00	-	7/29/2024	1
8/2/2021	Office Manager	E9	30.02	2,090	62,741.80		8/2/2021	4
10/9/2018	Working Foreman	F9	36.19	2,090	75,637.10	300	10/9/2018	7
6/13/2021	Shop Foreman	E8	29.45	2,090	61,550.50		6/13/2021	4
7/18/2016	Lead Mechanic	D7	26.87	2,090	56,158.30	300	7/18/2016	9
1/31/2011	Building Maintenance	C10	26.16	2,090	54,674.40	900	1/31/2011	15
10/22/2024	Building Maintenance	C2	21.89	2,090	45,750.10		10/22/2024	1
5/6/2024	Custodian	A10	20.62	2,090	43,095.80		5/6/2024	2
7/11/2022	Grounds Maintenance	C4	22.99	2,090	48,049.10		7/11/2022	3
9/20/2021	Grounds Maintenance	C4	22.99	2,090	48,049.10		9/20/2021	4
1/6/2014	Grounds Maintenance Lead	D10	28.51	2,090	59,585.90	500	1/6/2014	12
12/7/2016	Landfill Assistant 14 hrs/wk	A5	18.59	780	14,500.20	300	12/7/2016	9
11/14/2016	Collection System Lead Operator	E6	28.44	2,090	59,439.60	300	11/14/2016	9
3/27/2017	Heavy Equipment Oper	D6	26.35	2,090	55,071.50	300	3/27/2017	9
3/28/2016	Heavy Equipment Oper	D7	26.87	2,090	56,158.30	500	3/28/2016	10
3/8/2021	Heavy Equipment Oper	D10	28.51	2,090	59,585.90	300	3/8/2021	5
3/26/2024	Truck Driver/Laborer	C3	22.45	2,090	46,920.50		3/26/2024	2
7/5/2023	Truck Driver/Laborer	C3	22.45	2,090	46,920.50		7/5/2023	2
5/21/2024	Truck Driver/Laborer	C2	21.89	2,090	45,750.10		5/21/2024	2
5/1/2007	Truck Driver/Laborer	C10	26.16	2,090	54,674.40	900	5/1/2007	19
11/21/2022	Truck Driver/Laborer	C5	23.59	2,090	49,303.10		11/21/2022	3
	Summer Help				7,680.00			
	Summer Help				7,680.00			
	Summer Help				7,680.00			
						4,600		
		Total			1,165,343.20			
		less summer help			(23,040.00)			
		433			(14,500.00)			
		420			1,127,803.20		917,610.00	

General Category: Public Works

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Dept # 192

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5112	F/T Wages	140,483	100,119	145,819	53,856.00	143,520		
5132	F/T Wages OT	4,000	4,191	4,000	1,361.38	4,000		
5142	Shift Differential	175		175		175		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	144,658		149,994	55,217.38	147,695		-
5241	Siemens annual monitoring	3,000	2,907	3,000	2,994.00	3,200		
5242	Buildings R & M	18,000	29,085	18,000	9,624.25	18,000		
5243	HVAC Equip R & M	25,000	37,943	25,000	1,559.75	25,000		
5251	Other Equipment R & M	800	3,489	800	293.00	800		
5430	Building R & M Supplies	3,000	181	3,000		3,000		
5443	Misc. Parts & Accessories	4,500	7,604	4,500	5,693.66	4,500		
5451	Cleaning Supplies	8,500	7,114	8,500	5,180.47	8,500		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	62,800	88,323	62,800	25,345.13	63,000		-
5800	Capital Outlay - FY23 boiler RFT							
	TOTAL PUBLIC BUILDINGS	207,458	88,323	212,794	80,562.51	210,695	-	210,695
Change						(2,099)	-0.99%	

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5112	F/T Wages	145,819	143,520	(2,299)	-1.58%	steps/COLAs
5132	F/T Wages OT	4,000	4,000	-		
5142	Shift Differential	175	175	-		
5241	Siemens annual monitoring	3,000	3,200	200	6.67%	Contractual - Siemens
5242	Buildings R & M	18,000	18,000	-		
5243	HVAC Equip R & M	25,000	25,000	-		
5251	Other Equipment R & M	800	800	-		
5430	Building R & M Supplies	3,000	3,000	-		
5443	Misc. Parts & Accessories	4,500	4,500	-		
5451	Cleaning Supplies	8,500	8,500	-		
Totals		212,794	210,695	(2,099)	-0.99%	

General Category: Public Works

Dept # 422

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5112	F/T Wages	798,349	683,666	814,439	379,659.60	828,599		
5132	F/T Wages OT	15,000	19,319	15,000	12,483.78	20,000		
5142	Shift Differential incl Beeper Pay 07+	16,800	17,702	16,800	10,477.75	16,800		
5144	Longevity	4,700	4,400	4,700	900.00	4,600		
5145	Cell Phone Stipends	1,525	1,200	1,801	548.15	1,801		
5193	Vacation Buy Back	-	11,847	-		-		
5194	Sick Leave Buy Back	-	3,500	-		-		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	836,374	741,634	852,740	404,069.28	871,800	-	-
5242	Buildings R & M	7,100	855	7,100	246.00	7,100		
5245	Vehicles R & M	35,000	26,785	35,000	15,271.44	35,000		
5248	Computer R& M/ Support	2,000		2,000		2,000		
5251	Other Equipment R & M	9,200	16,607	9,200	3,248.98	9,200		
5310	DOT Testing	5,000	6,463	5,000	6,128.60	7,500		
5314	Seminars	1,000	2,625	1,000		2,500		
5315	Other Professional & Technical	18,500	15,390	18,500	3,895.00	18,500		
5320	Street Line Painting	28,000	40,691	40,000	46,144.89	50,000		
5341	Telephone/Internet/Pagers	3,000	4,110	3,500	2,121.42	4,200		
5344	Postage	100	99	100	108.67	100		
5345	Advertising	2,500	2,844	2,500	166.79	2,500		
5420	Office Supplies	3,500	4,332	3,500	3,094.15	3,500		
5430	Building R & M Supplies	2,500		2,500	1,407.85	2,500		
5435	Tools	5,000	15,306	5,000	1,609.71	5,000		
5440	Oil & Lubricants	10,000	10,243	10,000	4,839.45	10,000		
5443	Misc. Parts & Accessories	57,000	126,674	57,000	39,229.53	57,000		
5481	Gasoline	63,140	24,095	63,140	11,798.65	63,140		
5482	Diesel	67,200	37,212	67,200	13,756.00	67,200		
5484	Vehicle Parts & Accessories	85,000	76,501	85,000	47,082.84	85,000		
5500	Medical Supplies	200	546	250	156.19	500		
5530	Public Works Supplies	71,500	127,610	71,500	42,108.53	71,500		
5580	Equip < \$20K		34,434					
5582	Uniforms/Clothing	15,500	16,101	15,500	5,439.05	15,500		
5588	Trees	500		500		500		

General Category: Public Works

Dept # 422

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5710	Travel	125	296	125		125		
5730	Dues & Memberships	500	381	500	256.00	500		
5783	Hoister & Other Licenses	1,500	2,551	1,500	629.18	3,000		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	494,565	592,749	507,115	248,738.92	523,565	-	-
5800	Flail Mower Lease FY18-22, Vactor 23-26							
	TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL CONSTRUCTION/MAINT	1,330,939	1,334,383	1,359,855	652,808.20	1,395,365	-	1,395,365
Change						35,510	2.61%	

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5112	F/T Wages	814,439	828,599	14,160	1.74%	wage increases offset by new employees
5132	F/T Wages OT	15,000	20,000	5,000	33.33%	Reflection of actual
5142	Shift Differential incl Beeper Pay 07+	16,800	16,800	-		
5144	Longevity	4,700	4,600	(100)	-2.13%	Change in personnel
5145	Cell Phone Stipends	1,801	1,801	-		
5193	Vacation Buy Back	-	-	-		
5194	Sick Leave Buy Back	-	-	-		
5242	Buildings R & M	7,100	7,100	-		
5245	Vehicles R & M	35,000	35,000	-		
5248	Office Equipment R & M	2,000	2,000	-		
5251	Other Equipment R & M	9,200	9,200	-		
5310	DOT Testing	5,000	7,500	2,500	50.00%	Increase in testing
5314	Seminars	1,000	2,500	1,500	150.00%	Reflection of actual
5315	Other Professional & Technical	18,500	18,500	-		
5320	Street Line Painting	40,000	50,000	10,000	25.00%	Contractual increase from FRCOG Bid
5341	Telephone/Internet/Pagers	3,500	4,200	700	20.00%	Xfinity increase
5344	Postage	100	100	-		

General Category: Public Works

Dept # 422

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5345	Advertising	2,500	2,500	-		
5420	Office Supplies	3,500	3,500	-		
5430	Building R & M Supplies	2,500	2,500	-		
5432	Electrical Supplies	-	-	-		
5435	Tools	5,000	5,000	-		
5440	Oil & Lubricants	10,000	10,000	-		
5443	Misc. Parts & Accessories	57,000	57,000	-		
5481	Gasoline	63,140	63,140	-		
5482	Diesel	67,200	67,200	-		
5484	Vehicle Parts & Accessories	85,000	85,000	-		
5500	Medical Supplies	250	500	250	100.00%	Reflection of actual
5530	Public Works Supplies	71,500	71,500	-		
5582	Uniforms/Clothing	15,500	15,500	-		
5588	Trees	500	500	-		
5710	Travel	125	125	-		
5730	Dues & Memberships	500	500	-		
5783	Hoister & Other Licenses	1,500	3,000	1,500	100.00%	Reflection of actual
5800	Flail Mower Lease	-	-	-		
Totals		1,359,855	1,395,365	35,510	2.61%	

General Category: Public Works

SOLID WASTE

Dept # 433

		Budget	Actual	Budget	Expended	FY26	FY26	FY26
		FY24	FY24	FY25	thru	Level	BOS	BOS &
					12/31/2024	Services	Recommend	Fin Comm
						Request		Recommend
5112	F/T Wages	500		500		500		
5114	P/T Wages	13,471	13,816	14,126	6,899.91	14,500		
5132	F/T Wages OT	750	400	750	361.79	750		
5142	Shift Differential							
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	14,721	14,216	15,376	7,261.70	15,750	15,750	15,750
5280	Solid Waste Removal - Republic	260,000	265,534	332,000	199,719.56	348,600		
5281	Recyclables Removal - Republic	120,000	115,501	153,500	5,590.08	161,175		
5282	Bulky Waste Removal	55,000	58,073	55,000	31,201.14	55,000		
5283	Household Hazardous Waste	5,500	2,578	5,500	3,820.00	5,500		
5284	Landfill Monitoring	20,000	28,370	24,400	(3,995.00)	24,400		
5285	Tipping Fees (split from 5280)	157,500	122,773	157,500	60,879.26	165,375		
5286	Recyclables - Non Curbside	32,000	50,687	45,000	17,905.51	45,000		
5315	Recycle Ctr Permit/Inspection	500	175	500	200.00	500		
5380	Other Expenses	1,000	2,560	1,000	340.67	1,000		
5420	Office Supplies	13,000	10,396	13,000	614.50	13,000		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	664,500	656,648	787,400	316,275.72	819,550	819,550	819,550
	TOTAL SOLID WASTE	679,221	670,864	802,776	323,537.42	835,300	835,300	835,300
					Change	32,524	4.05%	

		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5112	F/T Wages	500	500			
5114	P/T Wages	14,126	14,500	374	2.65%	steps and COLAs
5132	F/T Wages OT	750	750	-		
5142	Shift Differential	-	-	-		
5280	Solid Waste Removal	332,000	348,600	16,600	5.00%	Contractual Increase - Casella
5281	Recyclables Removal	153,500	161,175	7,675	5.00%	Contractual Increase - Casella
5282	Bulky Waste Removal	55,000	55,000	-		
5283	Household Hazardous Waste	5,500	5,500	-		
5284	Landfill Monitoring	24,400	24,400	-		
5285	Solid Waste Tipping Fees	157,500	165,375	7,875	5.00%	Contractual Increase - Casella
5286	Recyclables - Non Republic	45,000	45,000	-		
5315	Recycle Ctr Permit/Inspection	500	500	-		
5380	Other Expenses	1,000	1,000	-		
5420	Office Supplies	13,000	13,000	-		
Totals		802,776	835,300	32,524	4.05%	

General Category: Public Works

Charging Stations

Dept # 480

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5211	Electricity	6,000	7,112	10,600	3,328.50	3,000		
5247	Network Service Fee	1,380	1,380	1,380		-		
TOTAL EXPENSES		7,380	8,492	11,980	3,328.50	3,000		3,000
TOTAL CHARGING STATIONS		7,380	8,492	11,980	3,328.50	3,000	3,000	3,000
Change						(8,980)	-74.96%	

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5211	Electricity	10,600	3,000	(7,600)	-71.70%	
5247	Network Service Fee	1,380	-	(1,380)	-100.00%	
Totals		11,980	3,000	(8,980)	-74.96%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Cemetery Commission Submitted by: Judith Lorei, Chair

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

The Cemetery Commission is not requesting a budget increase in FY26.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

Expansion. Our most significant expansion was to hire a new town Cemetery Sexton. In July, 2024 Amber Korby become Montague's first town Cemetery Sexton. She is responsible for providing tours of the cemetery, selling plots, processing deeds, marking graves for burial, coordinating with funeral directors and families for burials, assisting at the service when needed, and marking placement for headstones months after burial. We've received extremely positive feedback from funeral directors and families about Amber's professionalism, attention to detail and timely response in preparing for burial when a death occurs.

Enhancements. Each commission member is a "partner" to one or more of the town cemeteries. The partner's job is to assess its condition, keep an eye on any changes or irregularities and report back at monthly commission meetings. This assessment has resulted in additional maintenance of cemetery grounds including necessary pruning of trees and shrubs and removal of invasive vegetation.

Enhancements in Highland Woods (the new green burial section of Highland Cemetery) began in FY24 and continues this year. The forest floor of this 3 acre section has been cleared of downed trees and debris to make way for new graves. The Path of Reflection, a wood chip trail through the area is maintained by volunteers, as is the Circle of Reflection, the gathering area for mourners during burial services. The Circle of Reflection has also been the site for grief gatherings for the community. Two new benches will be installed in the Circle this Spring and a woodland garden has been created surrounding the Circle. Highland Woods is becoming a place where Montague residents and non-residents alike come to walk the Path and be in nature.

In addition to these activities, the Commission convened a second meeting of private cemetery operators (the first in FY24) to discuss challenges, share resources and offer support to each other.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

The commission approached the Selectboard at their 12/2/24 meeting to request that the Cemetery Sexton compensation move from a per-burial payment to an annual stipend. The responsibilities of the Sexton require far more time and effort than the \$100 burial fee covers. In addition, being paid at the time of burial doesn't cover time spent on other necessary responsibilities such as plot sales and other tasks related to post-burial work. The Cemetery Commission proposed an annual stipend of \$4,032 to cover 144 hours per year (\$28 per hour -the average salary in MA for this position). We believe that this model will make the Sexton position sustainable to ensure consistency in managing burials at Highland Cemetery.

Funding for the increase in annual stipend (an additional \$2,032) will come from the Cemetery Commission's Reserved Receipts for Appropriation account, an account with income generated through burial fees and plot sales.

The Commission began selling burial plots in Highland Woods in May, 2023. To-date we've sold 52 plots for a total of \$42,400 (\$700 for Montague residents/\$1,000 for non-residents). We've had a total of 22 burials in Highland Cemetery in calendar year 2024 (7 green burials) raising \$2,200 in burial fees.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

The commission received \$10,000 in funding from a special article approved at the March 2023 STM to prepare the green burial section of Highland Cemetery, Highland Woods. To date, we have \$945 remaining.

In October 2023 STM we received \$4,000 for Highland Woods signs and related costs. To date, we have \$656 remaining.



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Board of Health Submitted by: Ryan Paxton

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

The FY26 budget reflects a 4.84% increase in full-time wages due to step increases for current staff. The cell phone stipend and telephone line items have been removed, as the Town of Montague does not provide cell phones to department heads, and the Director now uses a device supplied by the Valley Health Regional Collaborative. Postage costs have risen by an estimated 20%, driven by the increasing cost of certified mail, which is legally required for delivering legal orders. A \$500 allocation has been added to the previously unfunded “advertising” line to cover costs associated with public hearing notices.

The “other purchased services” line has increased by 200% to better account for professional service needs such as constable services, legal consultations, or nuisance abatement. To balance these increases, the office supply budget has been reduced by 35.71%, reflecting a decrease in usage over the past two years. Overall, the proposed budget is \$4,140 higher than FY25. Excluding personnel costs, department expenditure requests were decreased from FY25.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you’d like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

The Montague Board of Health has deployed five outdoor air quality sensors through grant funding to monitor environmental conditions. The department has transitioned to inspectional software provided by the Valley Health Regional Collaborative, complemented by an iPad, enhancing report consistency and enforcement across the region. Additionally, the Board has contracted with Medical Director Timothy Lepore, MD, enabling the issuance of standing orders and obtaining CLIA waivers to support community vaccination and medical guidance efforts.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department’s ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any of your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

While the FY25 budget is sufficient to meet current goals, adding a second health agent may be necessary in the future. The Valley Health Regional Collaborative provides part-time health agent assistance to six municipalities under a shared service agreement. However, due to ongoing staffing shortages, the position has largely remained vacant. Additionally, the current office space may not adequately accommodate an additional staff member.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

No special articles were funded in FY24 or FY25. However, a 2021 special article (Account #001-5-950-5511-002, “Mosquito Control”) remains unspent. The funds were designated for joining the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control

District, which provides arbovirus surveillance and mosquito control. The Board of Health delayed joining pending legislative changes to mosquito control districts. The discussion is expected to resume this year, and the estimated annual membership cost remains \$5,000, as projected in FY25. These funds, combined with the department's current budget, could cover two years of services if the town decides to join.

General Category: Human Services

BOARD OF HEALTH

Dept # 511

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Wages Full Time	120,054	93,456	111,270	54,613.50	116,650		
5113	PT Clerk		4,548					
5116	Animal Inspector	1,575	1,575	1,764	882.00	1,764		
5117	Barn Inspector	1,050	1,050	1,400	1,400.00	1,400		
5115	Chair	1,765	1,765	1,980	990.00	1,980		
5115	2nd Member	1,605	1,605	1,800	900.00	1,800		
5115	3rd Member	1,605	1,605	1,800	900.00	1,800		
5144	Longevity	500		-		-		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	300	254	300		-		
5193	Vacation BuyBack							
5194	Sick Leave BuyBack							
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	128,454	105,859	120,314	59,685.50	125,394	-	
5300	Immigrant/Employment							
5310	Medical Services		1,000	1,000	33.75	1,000		
5314	Seminars	1,500	385	1,500	550.00	1,500		
5315	Public Health Nurse Service	28,600	16,798	28,600	8,358.00	28,600		
5341	Telephone/Tablet data packages	1,440		1,440		-		
5344	Postage	1,250	623	1,250	706.49	1,500		
5345	Advertising	300				500		
5350	Citizen Serve 3 licenses-2 for FY21	3,000	3,600	3,000	3,600.00	3,000		
5380	Other Purchased Services	500	419	500	47.67	1,500		
5420	Office Supplies	4,500	911	3,500	784.34	2,250		
5500	Medical Supplies	2,000		2,000		2,000		
5580	Other Supplies		1,311	1,000	84.08	1,000		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	300		300	40.00	300		
5710	Travel	3,000	1,393	3,000	532.04	3,000		
5730	Dues & Memberships	600	278	600	210.05	600		
	TOTAL EXPENSE	46,990	26,717	47,690	14,946	46,750	-	-
	TOTAL BOARD OF HEALTH	175,444	132,576	168,004	74,631.92	172,144	172,144	172,144
Change						4,140	2.46%	

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Hours	Total Annual
5/8/2023	Director of Health	G6			75,746.00
3/18/2024	Admin Asst	B6	22.37	1,828.50	40,903.55

DOH	Svc FY26	Long
	3	
	2	

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111 Wages Full Time	111,270	116,650	5,380	4.84%	Step increase for personnel
5114 Clerk (17.5 hrs)	-	-	-		
5116 Animal Inspector	1,764	1,764	-		
5117 Barn Inspector	1,400	1,400	-		
Chair	1,980	1,980	-		
2nd Member	1,800	1,800	-		
5115 3rd Member	1,800	1,800	-		
5144 Longevity	-	-	-		
5145 Cell Phone Stipend	300	-	(300)	-100.00%	Director no longer receives cellphone stipend
5193 Vacation BuyBack	-	-	-		
5194 Sick Leave BuyBack	-	-	-		
5310 Medical Services	1,000	1,000	-		
5314 Seminars	1,500	1,500	-		
5315 Public Health Nurse Service	28,600	28,600	-		
5341 Telephone	1,440	-	(1,440)	-100.00%	Cellphones not provided by TOM
5344 Postage	1,250	1,500	250	20.00%	Anticipated incr due to cost of certified mail
5345 Advertising	-	500	500	100.00%	Added for cost of ads for public hearing
5350 CitizenServe 3 licenses	3,000	3,000	-		
5380 Miscellaneous	500	1,500	1,000	200.00%	Moved from office supplies
5420 Office Supplies	3,500	2,250	(1,250)	-35.71%	Moved to Miscellaneous/Postage
5500 Medical Supplies	2,000	2,000	-		
5580 Other Supplies	1,000	1,000	-		
5581 Subscriptions/Books	300	300	-		
5710 Travel	3,000	3,000	-		
5730 Dues & Memberships	600	600	-		

Totals	168,004	172,144	4,140	2.46%	
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Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Council on Aging

Submitted by: Roberta Potter

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

The COA is submitting a request to hire a part-time administrative assistant. As the Senior Center’s programming, attendance, and complexity have grown, the mostly clerical aspects of the director’s job have come to consume a significant amount of time that could be better spent providing more direct aid to seniors, collaborating with local agencies, planning, programming, and publicizing. Our local peer Councils on Aging are better staffed and, in some instances, offer fewer classes and programs than we do. This position will be at level B with an hourly rate between \$19.76 to \$24.31. At maximum, the one year salary would amount to \$18,962.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you’d like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

In FY25 and going forward into FY26, the COA has become a resource for seniors requiring help with technology. Using funds from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (Digital Equity for Seniors), we have built a class curriculum, collaborated with the Franklin County Tech School, provided classes, and now have weekly tech help drop-in sessions. We will begin a second and equally complex Digital Equity in January of this year. Though we have hired a facilitator for these programs, the related administrative and supervisory responsibilities are the director’s.

Similarly time consuming and extremely important are the collaborations the COA has expanded, initiated or will initiate with LifePath, FRCOG, The Brick House, The Montague Public Libraries, and others. The director is involved with various town, county and statewide programs including various Digital Equity initiatives, Mass in Motion, and Age Friendly Communities and, most importantly, the newly formed Montague Villages. As we have offered more direct aid to seniors including home repair grants, free firewood through the Montague Wood Bank, AARP Tax Aide tax preparation services, and food distributions, more people are coming to us for individual help. This is our mission and it is wonderful that more people are using the COA as a resource but each encounter is time consuming and usually requires follow up sessions. Much of this assistance has involved helping individuals with complex and mostly on-line applications and problem solving. As age related services have become more internet based, more people need help doing such things as applying for SNAP, Fuel Assistance, replacement Social Security Cards, Social Security benefits, unemployment benefits, etc. The director is increasingly involved in individual consultations which are consuming time that is also required for routine administrative tasks. As our reputation as a place to get help grows, more people are coming to us for that help.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department’s ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any of your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

The COA is doing an inadequate job publicizing the services, programs, and classes that are available at the Senior Center. We have not maintained our website as well as we should; our newsletter is sporadic; we have not had the time or resources to market or expand our public presence in the community. In the director’s absence, the daily operations of the Senior Center are handled by a very dedicated group of volunteers who rely solely on the director for advice, policy interpretation and clarification, and direction. The proposed position would help resolve these

deficiencies and give the director additional time to work with the volunteers. It is also important that there be an individual on staff who could accomplish administrative tasks independently in the COA director's absence.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

Yes, the COA received funds to have the back of the aging Senior Center resided and various small repairs to the building trim. This work was completed. The COA Director is working with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office to have the building painted in the Spring of 2025. The budget request reflects expenses for painting supplies, painting equipment rental, and gutter installation

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5113	Council on Aging Director	46,557	46,557	-		no change
	Administrative Assistant	-	18,962	18,962	100.00%	new position
5144	Longevity	500	900	400	80.00%	mandated
5211	Electricity	3,840	3,500	(340)	-8.85%	based on FY25YTD & anticipated 5% incr
5214	Natural Gas	2,000	2,400	400	20.00%	based on FY25YTD & anticipated 5% incr
5231	Water	75	88	13	17.33%	base rate low consumption
5232	Sewer	300	500	200	66.67%	anticipated rate increase
5242	Buildings R & M	2,000	4,000	2,000	100.00%	gutters, painting supplies & equipment rental
5251	Other Equipment R & M	500	-	(500)	-100.00%	moved to EOEA formula grant
5279	Custodial Services (16 hrs/wk)	2,500	-	(2,500)	-100.00%	moved to EOEA formula grant
5344	Postage	300	-	(300)	-100.00%	moved to EOEA formula grant
5451	Cleaning Supplies	300	300	-		
5586	Miscellaneous	-	-	-		
5710	Travel	400	-	(400)	-100.00%	moved to EOEA formula grant
Totals		59,272	77,207	17,935	30.26%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Libraries Submitted by: Caitlin Kelley

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

The Montague Public Libraries request changes to the following lines:

5111 Wages Full Time: \$35,178 added: This increase represents the cost of splitting the Library Technician role into two new positions, an Adult Services Coordinator and a Library Assistant/Technician.

7 out of 10 similarly populated towns have an Adult Services Coordinator-type position. In Montague, this position would focus on technology training and digital resources, community outreach and services to underserved populations, adult programs, collection development and maintenance, and inter-library loan. This position would directly support the digital literacy programming and digital navigation assistance recommended in Montague’s Digital Equity Plan as well as the recommendations for cultural programming and immigrant support detailed in the town’s Comprehensive Plan.

The Library Assistant/Technician would be responsible for processing and cataloging all new materials and would also work on the circulation desk. Having a person in this position near full-time would mean that the library would rely less on Substitute Library Assistants when other library staff members call out sick or take a vacation.

Implementing these changes in FY26 would align closely with an anticipated retirement, allowing the hiring process to be more streamlined and less complicated. Additionally, by implementing positions that are full-time or close to full-time, the libraries will start to move away from super part-time positions that are prone to high rates of turnover.

5242 Alarm Monitoring: \$460 added: Panic buttons were installed at all three library locations to ensure the safety of library staff who work alone.

Please note that the Libraries’ initial budget included wage increases for all Library Assistants and the Library Technician. Though I was advised to remove the proposed increases, so that negotiations could be separately worked out with the Selectboard and with the union, it was recommended that I retain the rationale for the increases in this narrative. As such, the following is not represented in the budget itself but remains a priority of mine and of the Libraries’ Trustees.

5113 Wages Part Time: \$21,876 added: This increase represents the cost of reclassifying Montague’s Library Assistants from grade A to grade B in the current NAGE wage scale or from grade I to grade H in the proposed classification system. A point-by-point comparison between the Library Assistant’s job duties with that of an Administrative Assistant position already classified as a B clearly demonstrates the equivalence of the roles. In addition to providing equity and fairness across town departments, it is my hope that better wages will lead to staff retention. Of the four library assistants who have resigned in the last three years, three of them left for higher-paying positions elsewhere.

(Please note, if the Library Technician position is not split into two roles as detailed above, then I would petition for that role to be reclassified from B to C in the current scale or H to G in the new one. A comparison of duties between this position and the higher-graded Technician employed by the Assessor's office also demonstrate job equivalency)

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

The Millers Falls Branch Library was painted, carpeted, and reconfigured to make the space more comfortable and flexible. Additionally, the libraries were awarded a technology grant from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine to purchase a sound-dampening meeting pod. Once the pod is installed, patrons will be able to schedule the pod for semi-private meetings: social service consultations to sign up for benefits, telehealth appointments, tutoring, and Zoom meetings.

A collection of ESOL materials was added to the Carnegie Library, large print collections were added to both branches, and grant-funded collections of assistive technology were added to all three libraries, including a portable amplifier, digital magnifier, a reader pen, and more. Additionally, an assistive listening system was purchased, which will allow those who are hard of hearing to use a personal amplifier to better hear during events like town meeting, etc. It can be borrowed by any town department.

The libraries' selected a winning bid for a new website project. Featuring the new branding and logo developed by local designer, Liz Moran, the new website will be clean, user-friendly, ADA compliant, translatable, and allow the public to register for programs and reserve meeting rooms. The website will be almost completely funded by an ALA Libraries Transforming Communities grant.

To support the libraries' FY25 professional development objectives, library staff meetings were evaluated and reformatted to incorporate up to three half-day professional development/staff training days each year. At our first half-day training, robust staff discussion on better serving unhoused patrons led to a change in Montague's borrowing protocol. This change was brought to the attention of the regional library consortium, which, since then, has updated their guidelines for serving unhoused patrons and incorporated parts of Montague's policy across all central and western Massachusetts. Slack was also implemented to improve staff communication across library locations and staff evaluations were improved.

The development of a staff programming team has led to a more intentional program development and fostered additional programming and services at both the Montague Center and Millers Falls branch libraries.

Finally, the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association and the Montague Public Libraries were awarded a National Endowment for the Arts' Big Read grant. The grant program kicked off in mid-November and will fund three seasons of programs on writing, placemaking, and art programming in Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties. The selected "read" is Ross Gay's collection of poetry, *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

The Montague Public Libraries have met or are soon slated to meet our FY26 goals.

That said, the community has demonstrated both need and interest in expanded adult and family program offerings, community outreach, and technology training. All these items would fall under the duties of the Adult Services Coordinator, detailed above.

Similarly, high turnover has meant that library staff need to regularly facilitate lengthy hiring and training processes. This could be ameliorated by paying staff higher wages and by consolidating several part-time positions into fewer positions that are full-time or near full-time.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

For FY24, the libraries received funding to replace the windows and back door at the Millers Falls Branch Library. That work, along with other renovations, was completed this fall. The branch is now very bright!



For FY25, the libraries received funds to enable the town to apply for the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program. Montague's application was submitted in May, and we anticipate hearing whether or not our project will be funded in early 2025.

General Category: Culture & Recreation

LIBRARIES

Dept # 610

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Wages Full Time	178,979	178,979	183,748	88,422.00	185,447		
5113	Wages Part Time	148,612	145,076	152,340	70,624.33	157,631		
5114	Wages - Substitutes	8,295	7,601	8,295	3,798.75	8,295		
5142	Shift Differential	750	788	750	375.75	750		
5144	Longevity	3,100	2,800	3,600	800.00	3,100		
5193	Vacation Buy Back							
5194	Sick Leave Buy Back							
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	339,736	335,245	348,733	164,020.83	355,223		-
5211	Electricity	12,500	12,473	12,500	4,384.18	14,000		
5213	Heating Oil	16,100	6,039	16,100	1,257.70	12,000		
5231	Water	200	327	200	100.00	400		
5232	Sewer	450	531	450	450.00	600		
5241	Bldg R & M	4,500	2,269	4,500		3,500		
5242	Alarm Monitoring	715	1,044	715	1,013.65	1,175		
5247	CWMARS	15,500	12,819	15,100	12,836.00	15,100		
5248	Office Equipment R & M	700	461	700		700		
5342	Internet Connection	4,860	4,426	2,460	1,296.31	2,460		
5344	Postage	500	242	500	85.47	500		
5345	Advertising	200	468	200		200		
5350	Recreation Programs	7,500	8,049	10,400	4,087.50	10,400		
5360	Book delivery to branches	1,775	1,658	1,775	656.07	1,775		
5380	PO Box Rental							
5420	Office Supplies	7,000	6,750	6,500	3,414.60	6,500		
5580	Other Supplies	1,600	2,088	2,500	508.14	2,500		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	49,000	50,532	49,000	23,522.98	50,000		
5585	Library of Things	5,000	7,436	7,400	1,320.05	7,500		
5587	Media	33,000	36,467	33,000	11,211.00	33,000		
5590	Equipment < \$2K	1,000	3,869	4,000	178.38	2,000		
5710	Travel	1,400	1,351	1,400	451.02	1,400		
5730	Dues & Memberships	100	443	100		100		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	163,600	159,741	169,500	66,773.05	165,810		-
	TOTAL LIBRARIES	503,336	494,986	518,233	230,793.88	521,033	521,033	521,033
Change						2,800	0.54%	

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hourly Rate	Days/Hrs	Total Annual	DOH	Svc FY26	Longevity
10/18/2021	Library Director	G10			82,394.00	10/18/2021	4	
3/24/2014	Children's Librarian	E10	30.77	1,827	56,216.79	3/24/2014	12	500
	Admin Support Stipend				3,500.00			
1/23/2024	Library Cataloger/Technician	B9	23.72	1,827	43,336.44	1/23/2024	2	
5/3/2018	Library Assistant I 26 hrs + 15	A7	19.33	1,367	26,424.11	5/3/2018	8	300
9/10/2007	Library Assistant I 9 hrs +15	A10	20.62	483	9,959.46	9/10/2007	18	900
3/31/2014	Library Assistant I 27.5 hrs + 20	A10	20.62	1,450	29,899.00	3/31/2014	12	500
6/25/2019	Library Assistant I 21 hrs +15	A7	19.33	1,107	21,398.31	6/25/2019	7	300
2/4/2020	Library Assistant I 16 hrs +15	A6	18.91	847	16,016.77	2/4/2020	6	300
10/31/2018	Library Assistant I 12/wk +15	A9	20.12	639	12,856.68	10/31/2018	7	300
7/1/2023	Library Assistant I 14 hrs +15	A2	17.17	743	12,757.31	7/1/2023	2	
6/11/2024	Childrens' Asst 13.5/wk +50	B2	20.24	752	15,220.48	8/29/2023	2	
4/2/2024	Library Assistant I 14 hrs +15	A3	17.63	743	13,099.09	4/2/2024	2	
	Substitute Library Assistants		15.00	553	8,295.00			
Total								3,100

351,373.44

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
			-		
5111 Wages Full Time	183,748	185,447	1,699	0.92%	COLA/wage increases
5113 Wages Part Time	152,340	157,631	5,291	3.47%	COLA/wage increases
5114 Wages - Substitutes	8,295	8,295	-		
5142 Shift Differential	750	750	-		
5144 Longevity	3,600	3,100	(500)	-13.89%	
5193 Vacation Buy Back	-	-	-		
5194 Sick Leave Buy Back	-	-	-		
5211 Electricity	12,500	14,000	1,500	12.00%	Add mini-splits and HRV in the Carnegie basement
5213 Heating Oil	16,100	12,000	(4,100)	-25.47%	Installation of mini-splits has reduced reliance on oil
5231 Water	200	400	200	100.00%	Bills have increased
5232 Sewer	450	600	150	33.33%	Bills have increased
5241 Bldg R & M	4,500	3,500	(1,000)	-22.22%	Assuming we receive funding for ADA upgrades
5242 Alarm Monitoring	715	1,175	460	64.34%	Panic buttons were installed to protect solo-staff at the branches
5247 Computer R & M	15,100	15,100	-		
5248 Office Equipment R & M	700	700	-		
5341 Telephone	-	-	-		
5341 Internet	2,460	2,460	-		
5344 Postage	500	500	-		
5345 Advertising	200	200	-		

5350	Recreation Programs	10,400	10,400	-		
5360	Book Delivery	1,775	1,775	-		
5380	PO Box Rental	-	-	-		
5420	Office Supplies	6,500	6,500	-		
5580	Other Supplies	2,500	2,500	-		
5581	Subscriptions/Books	49,000	50,000	1,000	2.04%	Incr required for compliance with state guidelines
5585	Library of Things	7,400	7,500	100	1.35%	Incr required for compliance with state guidelines
5587	Media	33,000	33,000	-		Incr required for compliance with state guidelines
5590	Equipment < \$2K	4,000	2,000	(2,000)	-50.00%	While I anticipate purchasing a replacement copier for the Carnegie Library, the current slate of public and staff computers have all been replaced in the last 4 years
5710	Travel	1,400	1,400	-		
5730	Dues & Memberships	100	100	-		

Totals 518,233 521,033 2,800 100.00%



**Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE**

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Parks & Recreation Submitted by: Jon Dobosz

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

- Facilities/Grounds R&M – MPRD anticipates an increase in costs due to the installation of lights at the skate park (electricity use), in addition to the improvements to Montague Center Park (annual replenishment of wood fiber for the playground area, rain garden, and pollinator area).
- Copier Lease Equipment R&M - MPRD obtained a new copier/scanner for their office this past year at a slightly increased cost.
- Internet – Per recommendation of Montague’s IT consultants, MPRD expanded the Wi-Fi at Unity Park to better serve the community as well as the department.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you’d like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

- Montague Ctr. Park Improvement Project - MPRD has begun the construction phase of the project, with completion slated for mid-May of 2025. Enhancements will include a new playground area, rain garden, pollinator area, and accessibility improvements including a more formalized parking lot.
- Unity Skatepark Lights - The Unity Skatepark Light Project broke ground in August of this year and was completed in early October. There are currently two Musco stadium-style lights installed by Central Mass Signal, which was funded through the ARPA program. This project will greatly expand park use to the local skateboard/scooter/BMX community.
- Old Blacksmith Shop - The initial evaluation of the building was completed in the summer of 2024, with additional consultation work contracted for the winter of 2025. The findings of the recommendations will provide a clearer view on the future of that space, which will either include full restoration, partial restoration, or complete demolition. The Parks & Recreation Department is working with the Montague Historical Commission and Selectboard to develop a plan that will best serve the community.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department’s ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

There are currently no challenges to our department’s ability to meet our FY25 goals and requirements.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list and share the status of each of those expenditures/projects.

See above with regards to the Montague Center Park Project and Old Blacksmith Shop.

General Category: Culture & Recreation

RECREATION

Dept # 630

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Director of Parks & Recreation	80,384	80,384	82,394	39,460.75	82,394		
5113	Clerk 20 hrs	24,669	24,669	25,282	12,155.00	25,282		
5124	P/T Wages Temp	34,450	34,553	35,950	35,949.47	37,450		
5144	Longevity	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500.00	1,500		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	141,003	141,105	145,126	89,065.22	146,626		-
5242	Facilities/Grounds R&M	15,000	14,682	15,000	8,004.09	16,500		
5248	Copier Lease/Equip R&M	1,400	1,792	1,400	976.78	2,000		
5314	Seminars	700	335	700		700		
5342	Internet	1,800	2,420	1,800	1,334.00	2,700		
5500	Playground Surface Materials	-		-	1,605.32	-		
5710	Travel	400	407	400	237.85	400		
5730	Dues/Memberships	400	285	400	315.00	400		
	TOTAL EXPENSE	19,700	19,921	19,700	12,473.04	22,700		-
	TOTAL	160,703	161,026	164,826	101,538.26	169,326	169,326	169,326

Change 4,500 2.73%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Daily/Hrly Rate	Days/Hrs	Total Annual	DOH	Svc FY26	Long
10/1/2001	Director of Parks & Recreation (days)	G10			82,394.00	10/1/2001	24	1,000
10/4/2012	Clerk 20 hrs	B10	24.31	1,040.00	25,282.40	10/4/2012	13	500

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
				-		
5111	Director of Parks & Recreation	82,394	82,394	-		
5113	Clerk 20 hrs	25,282	25,282	-		
5124	P/T Wages Temp	35,950	37,450	1,500	4.17%	Annual adjustment for raises
5144	Longevity	1,500	1,500	-		
5242	Facilities/Grounds R&M	15,000	16,500	1,500	10.00%	Covers costs of expansion of park services; skatepark lighting and Montague Ctr. Park playground surface
5248	Copier Lease/Equip R&M	1,400	2,000	600	42.86%	New copier lease cost increase
5314	Seminars	700	700	-		
5341	Telephone	-	-	-		
5342	Internet	1,800	2,700	900	50.00%	Public wi-fi boosted FY25; incr reflects cost
5500	Playground Surface Materials	-	-	-		
5710	Travel	400	400	-		
5730	Dues/Memberships	400	400	-		

Totals		164,826	169,326	4,500	2.73%	
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General Category: Debt Service

DEBT

Dept # 700

Excluded Debt		Budget	Actual	Budget	Expended thru	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
EXPENDITURES		FY24	FY24	FY25	12/31/2024			
710	Long Term Principal							
5916	Multi-Purpose 2006	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000.00	15,000		
5920	Police Station 11/15/09	280,868	280,868	295,650		310,433		
5930	CSO MWPAT #05-22 \$957,448	21,700	21,700	22,138	22,138.40	22,586		
5931	CSO MWPAT #05-22A \$1,911,052	25,281	25,281	25,898	25,898.40	26,532		
5932	CSO USDA #91-16 \$1,024,000	10,000	10,000	10,000		10,000		
5933	CSO USDA #92-18 \$958,000	7,508	7,508	7,818	7,817.63	8,140		
5934	6/2/07 Montague Center Roof \$95,475	4,133	4,133	4,350		4,568		
5936	FRCOG Brownfields Loan Principal							
5937	Final PSF Principal \$103,000	5,000	5,000	5,000		5,000		
5944	Skateboard Park	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000.00	7,000		
5947	#2 5/3/14 MF Soil Stab. \$81,679	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000.00	6,000		
5948	Town Share \$22 5/7/16 Siphon	24,000	24,000	25,000	25,000.00	26,000		
5949	#1 3/29/18 DPW Facility 1st Debt	78,000	78,000	82,000	82,000.00	84,000		
5950	#1 3/29/18 DPW Facility 2nd Debt	160,000	160,000	170,000		180,000		
5951	#1 3/29/18 DPW Facility Final Debt	50,000	50,000	55,000	55,000.00	60,000		
5952	#28 5/7/16 Strathmore Abatement	18,000	18,000	19,000	19,000.00	19,000		
	Long Term Principal	712,490	712,489	749,854	264,854.43	784,259	784,259	784,259
751	Long Term Interest							
5916	Multi-Purpose 2006	2,100	2,100	1,500	900.00	900		
5920	Police Station 11/15/09	77,855	77,854	63,812	31,905.56	49,029		
5930	CSO MWPAT #05-22 \$957,448	1,572	1,572	1,134	677.66	687		
5930-100	CSO MWPAT #05-22 \$957,448 Adm	118	118	85	50.82	52		
5931	CSO MWPAT #05-22A \$1,911,052	10,594	10,593	9,976	5,144.14	9,343		
5931-100	CSO MWPAT #05-22A \$1,911,052 Adm	658	658	620	319.64	581		
5932	CSO USDA #91-16 \$1,024,000	9,303	9,303	8,803	4,401.25	8,303		
5933	CSO USDA #92-18 \$958,000	13,112	13,112	12,802	12,802.37	12,480		
5934	6/2/07 Montague Center Roof \$95,475	1,146	1,146	939	469.44	722		
5936	FRCOG Brownfields Loan Interest							
5937	Final PSF Interest \$103,000	2,075	2,075	1,925	962.50	1,738		
5944	Skateboard Park	1,950	1,950	1,679	887.50	1,487		
5947	#2 5/3/14 MF Soil Stab #81,679	1,620	1,620	1,388	735.00	1,223		
5948	Town Share #22 5/7/16 Siphon	15,763	15,763	14,819	7,581.25	14,118		
5949	#1 3/29/18 DPW Facility 1st Debt	73,534	73,534	70,457	35,791.88	68,174		
5950	#1 3/29/18 DPW Facility 2nd Debt	161,769	161,769	153,769	76,884.38	145,269		
5951	#1 3/29/18 DPW Facility Final Debt	40,650	40,650	38,025	19,700.00	35,150		
5952	#28 5/7/16 Strathmore Abatement	8,010	8,010	7,270	3,825.00	6,510		
	Long Term Interest	421,829	421,826	389,003	203,038.39	355,766	355,766	355,766
752-5922	Interest on ST notes for DPW Facility			-		-		
752-5925	Interest on Short Term Notes	20,000	22,937	20,000		20,000		
	Short Term Interest	20,000	22,937	20,000	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
	TOTAL DEBT	1,154,319	1,157,252	1,158,857	467,892.82	1,160,025	1,160,025	1,160,025
					Change	1,168	0.10%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Intergovernmental Submitted by: Walter Ramsey

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

FCSWMD has voted a preliminary assessment increase of 5% to cover salary increases and hauling costs. Veterans District preliminary budget has a 2% increase. For FRCOG assessments, I am carrying 2% increase, however an early indication from FRCOG administration is that that this is likely to be level funded. The FRCOG figured will be updated between now and their vote on 1/30.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

No

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

No

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

No

General Category: Intergovernmental

INTERGOVERNMENT

Dept # 840

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5664	Franklin Regional Council Govts (FRCOG)	52,000	51,689	51,418	25,859.00	51,128		
5665	FRCOG Emerg Communications	7,519	7,206	7,206	6,961.85	7,350		
5666	FCSWMD	33,810	33,809	35,600	26,659.53	37,413		
5667	FRCOG REPC	150	150	150		150		
5668	Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District			-		-		
5670	Veterans' District	20,445	20,459	22,500	22,346.83	23,000		
TOTAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL		113,924	113,312	116,874	81,827.21	119,041	119,041	119,041
Change						2,167	1.85%	

	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5664	51,418	51,128	(290)	-0.56%	
5665	7,206	7,350	144	2.00%	Placeholder FY25 plus 2%
5666	35,600	37,413	1,813	5.09%	Based on voted prelim FCSWMD Budget
5667	150	150	-		
5668	-	-	-		Pay through Special Article (5k)
5670	22,500	23,000	500	2.22%	prelim from UPVSD. Board vote Jan 7
Totals	116,874	119,041	2,167	1.85%	

General Category: General Government

COLLE RRA

Dept #228-183

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5231	Water	1,000	274	500		500		
5232	Sewer	1,000	552	750		750		
5242	Building R & M	40,000	19,413	40,000	3,249.87	40,000		
5315	Other Professional/Technical	10,000		10,000		10,000		
5341	Telephone	750	737	1,000	329.79	1,000		
5451	Cleaning Supplies	500						
	TOTAL EXPENSES	53,250	20,975	52,250	3,579.66	52,250		-
5710	Long Term Principal					-		
5711	2006 Bond Prinicipal							
5751	Long Term Interest							
5752	2006 Bond Interest							
	TOTAL DEBT	-		-	-	-		-
5991	Trans to General Fund (PY Res Fd Trans)							
	TOTAL COLLE	53,250	20,975	52,250	3,579.66	52,250	52,250	52,250
Change						-	0.00%	

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	
5211 Electricity	-	-	-		
5214 Natural Gas	-	-	-		
5231 Water	500	500	-		
5232 Sewer	750	750	-		
5242 Building R & M	40,000	40,000	-		
5279 Custodial Services	-	-	-		
5315 Other Professional/Technical	10,000	10,000	-		
5341 Telephone	1,000	1,000	-		
5420 Office Supplies	-	-	-		
5451 Cleaning Supplies	-	-	-		
5710 Long Term Principal	-	-	-		
5711 2006 Bond Prinicipal	-	-	-		
5751 Long Term Interest	-	-	-		
5752 2006 Bond Interest	-	-	-		



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: AIRPORT Submitted by: AIRPORT COMMISSION

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

There are several changes that notable in the FY26 budget compared to the FY25 budget. A modest increase for wages 5111 from \$113,838 to \$117,318 include an increase for the Airport Manager from an hourly based step (E10) to a salary based step (F3), increasing from \$64,247 to \$66,517. This position, while still under compensated, will be in line with the other department heads that are all salary positions. A single step increase for the only other full time position completes the increases to that line item. In FY25 the part time intern wages were reduced by \$5,000 as part of a larger budget reduction, and in FY26 the funding is being restored to the full \$25,000, to allow for 2 rotating part time positions, where together it creates 1 full time position. Electricity increased by \$2,000 to cover the cost of a heat pump source system in place of convention heating oil system in one of the buildings. This budget compare to FY25 in most other line items, either increasing less than \$500 or in some cases decreasing. Overall the total increase from FY25 to FY26 totals \$16,380, with \$8,980 contributed to wages and the reaming to the general operational budget. It is important to remember that while it is a 5.75% increase from FY25 to FY26, in FY25 the budget was reduced by \$32,750 from the proposed to the actual, and this increase is still less than what would be the ideal operating budget. With the proposed budget the following would be the source of funding at this time: Airport Revenues: \$229,662. FAA Debt Service Grant: \$70,993. Taxation: \$132,693. (In FY25 some funds were used from the "sale of real estate" line to offset debt service that totals \$28,942) If that funding source is allocated in FY26 again, it would reduce the taxation request from \$132,693 to \$103,751. The FY26 budget was crafted while kneeing in mind the need to keep cost down and keep the facility operating safely and smoothly. There is no "one and done" solution to the airport funding vs airport revenue at this time. The submitted budget is the lowest it can be without beginning to have negative effects on the daily operation of the airport.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe. None at this time.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26. Continued inflation and lingering supply chain issues are the primary issues that have the greatest effect on the Airport and the ability to operate within a rather tight budget. For example, replacing a window in one of the several building on the airport cost \$4,500 in August 2024. This used up 100% of the allocated funds for the entire year for "Other Supply Building", a line item that should be bused to fund work outside of normal upkeep that would be funded from our "Building and Grounds" line item. Prior to 2020 this same window would have cost less than \$2,000. While attempting to keep a level funded budget plan in FY26, it is critical that some increases are added to allow for volatile energy markets and professional trade industries. In order to keep up on the preventative maintenance service on the 7 airport owned and operated buildings and structures the FY26 budget will need to have some room for increased allocation, and will also require some tough decision on what is completed for projects and what is pushed off until a later date. Until the Airport revenues increase to an acceptable level, the Airport Commission expects to continue with deferred maintenance due to the limited budget.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

In FY24 the airport was allocated funding for the "local share" of a \$1.6 million dollar Airport Apron Replacement Project. The town is only responsible of 5% of the total project cost. This project is to take place in FY25, FY26, and FY27. Currently this project is on time and within the budget. Phase I was completed without issue, and provided the Airport Commission with a detailed environmental assessment of the proposed work area and any negative effects the work would have on the wildlife population. Phase II is underway now, which includes the planning, design, IFE, and bidding of the actual construction portion of this project. Phase III is expected to commence in January 2026 and conclude in late June 2026. In addition, the Airport received just shy of \$400,000 in MassDOT Aeronautics funding for the installation of a hangar door, purchase of equipment, and security camera installation all at a 100% state share. Funds were allocated from ARPA for the purchase of a new mower to replace the existing 16 year old unit that failed, this project is completed and closed out.

General Category: Public Works

AIRPORT

Dept # 482

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Full Time Wages	109,976	109,450	113,838	54,520.00	117,325		
5114	Part Time Wages							
5124	PT FCTS Intern	25,000	22,621	20,000	19,669.25	25,000		
5132	Full Time Overtime	2,000	1,488	1,500	1,107.84	2,000		
5144	Longevity (year 6)	500	300	300		300		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	600	600	600	288.50	600		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	138,076	134,459	136,238	75,585.59	145,225	-	-
5211	Electricity	16,000	16,455	16,000	6,392.13	18,000		
5213	Fuel Oil (House)	2,750	1,157	1,500	746.71	-		
5214	Natural Gas	2,250	1,580	1,800	135.15	1,500		
5215	Propane	1,000	57	1,000		1,000		
5231	Water	1,250	1,031	1,250	1,237.10	1,250		
5232	Sewer		77		150.00	400		
5241	Building & Grounds R & M	15,000	21,521	14,500	29,197.52	16,500		
5244	Equipment R & M	12,500	34,023	13,000	16,409.48	16,500		
5251	Beacon Lights R & M	3,500	2,981	3,000	8,405.05	3,000		
5275	Snow Removal Services	2,000	1,817	2,000	143.88	2,000		
5302	Legal	1,500	135	1,000		1,000		
5314	Seminars/Training	1,500		1,000		1,000		
5315	Other Professional & Technical	1,500	4,627	1,500	9,285.65	1,500		
5341	Telephone/Internet	3,300	3,707	3,750	1,414.70	3,750		
5344	Postage	350	36	200	38.60	150		
5345	Advertising	3,000	3,089	2,000	5,668.17	2,000		
5420	Office Supplies	1,500	3,023	1,500	2,229.28	2,000		
5443	Misc. Parts & Accessories	3,000	2,028	2,000	2,430.57	3,000		
5481	Gasoline	7,500	4,700	6,000	1,866.80	6,000		
5482	Diesel	8,500	3,069	6,000	4,041.18	6,000		
5500	House Expense	2,500	634	1,250	1,758.02	1,250		
5580	Other Supply Equipment	4,500	1,980	4,500		4,000		
5581	Other Supply Building	4,500	15,295	4,500	5,878.56	4,000		
5582	Clothing Allowance	3,750	4,888	4,250	2,231.63	4,450		
5584	Vending Exp	500	167	500	1,426.35	650		
5710	Travel	2,500	289	1,000	116.99	1,000		

5730	Dues	750	538	500		500		
5740	Insurance	18,000	19,316	19,500	22,593.00	20,000		
	Town Payment	8,000						
5790	Town Overhead	3,939	3,939	4,000	4,000.00	4,000		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	136,839	152,159	119,000	127,796.52	126,400	-	-
	Capital Outlay							
5800	FAA Local Share	10,000						
	Total Capital Outlay	10,000	-	-		-	-	-
	TOTAL AIRPORT	284,915.00	286,617.52	255,238.00	203,382.11	271,625.00	271,625.00	271,625.00
					Change	16,387	6.42%	

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hrly Rate	Rate #1 Hrs	Total Annual	Yrs Svc FY26	Long
5/11/2017	Airport Manager	F3	31.86	2,088	66,523.68	9.00	300.00
6/14/2021	Operations Mgr	D3	24.33	2,088	50,801.04	5.00	300.00

FY26 Revenue Estimates & details

231,971	Projected Income
99,396	Estimated Taxation funding
23,372	Sale of RE for remaining Pioneer Debt
70,993	Grant for Debt
425,732	Total Rev

271,625 482 Operating - Level Services less Capital (assumes will be Sp Art)

99,935 700 Debt

54,172 900 Benefits

425,732 Total Budget using original request less CO

- Excess/(Deficit)

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111	Airport Manager Wages	113,838	117,325	3,487	3.06%	
5111	Full Time Wages	-	-	-		
5124	PT FCTS Intern	20,000	25,000	5,000	25.00%	
5145	Longevity	-	-	-		
5132	Full Time Overtime	1,500	2,000	500	33.33%	
5144	Longevity (year 6)	300	300	-		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	600	600	-		
5211	Electricity	16,000	18,000	2,000	12.50%	
5213	Fuel Oil (House)	1,500	-	(1,500)	-100.00%	
5214	Natural Gas	1,800	1,500	(300)	-16.67%	
5215	Propane	1,000	1,000	-		
5231	Water	1,250	1,250	-		
5241	Building & Grounds R & M	14,500	16,500	2,000	13.79%	
5244	Equipment R & M	13,000	16,500	3,500	26.92%	
5251	Beacon Lights R & M	3,000	3,000	-		
5275	Snow Removal Services	2,000	2,000	-		
5302	Legal	1,000	1,000	-		
5314	Seminars/Training	1,000	1,000	-		
5315	Other Professional & Technical	1,500	1,500	-		
5341	Telephone/Internet	3,750	3,750	-		
5344	Postage	200	150	(50)	-25.00%	
5345	Advertising	2,000	2,000	-		
5420	Office Supplies	1,500	2,000	500	33.33%	
5443	Misc. Parts & Accessories	2,000	3,000	1,000	50.00%	
5481	Gasoline	6,000	6,000	-		
5482	Diesel	6,000	6,000	-		
5500	House Expense	1,250	1,250	-		
5580	Other Supply Equipment	4,500	4,000	(500)	-11.11%	
5581	Other Supply Building	4,500	4,000	(500)	-11.11%	
5582	Clothing Allowance	4,250	4,450	200	4.71%	
5584	Vending Exp	500	650	150	30.00%	
5710	Travel	1,000	1,000	-		
5730	Dues	500	500	-		
5740	Insurance	19,500	20,000	500	2.56%	
	Town Payment	-	-	-		
5790	Town Overhead	4,000	4,000	-		
5800	FAA Local Share	-	-	-		
	Totals	255,238.00	271,225.00	15,987.00	6.26%	

General Category: Public Works - Airport

Dept # 600-700

		Budget	Actual	Budget	Expended	FY26	FY26	FY26
		FY24	FY24	FY25	thru	Level	BOS	BOS &
EXPENDITURES					12/31/2024	Services	Recommend	Fin Comm
						Request		Recommend
	Long Term Principal							
710-5901	Purchase Pioneer Aviation	63,000	63,000	67,000	67,000.00	67,000		
710-5902	Fuel Pump Upgrade	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000.00	4,000		
	Long Term Principal	67,000	67,000	71,000	71,000.00	71,000	-	-
	Long Term Interest							
751-5901	Purchase Pioneer Aviation	32,645	32,645	30,045	15,692.50	27,365		
751-5902	Fuel Pump Upgrade	1,890	1,890	1,730	905.00	1,570		
	Long Term Interest	34,535	34,535	31,775	16,597.50	28,935	-	-
	TOTAL WPCF DEBT	101,535.00	101,535	102,775.00	87,597.50	99,935.00	99,935.00	99,935.00
					Change	(2,840)	-2.76%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Clean Water Facility Submitted by: Chelsey Little, Superintendent

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

Wages: The facility is proposing upgrading the CWF Administrative Assistant position to an Office Manager position due to increased regulatory requirements and administrative work load within the facility. A draft job description was submitted to the Selectboard for review, with it closely resembling the DPW's Office Manager position, with more department/wastewater specific additional job duties. The increase in job responsibilities and minimal requirements for the position will assist the Superintendent with managing multiple regulated programs at a higher level of administrative assistance. The budget impact would equal a \$6,702 increase in salary, as compared to the current position.

Other Wages: This increase is due to contractual on-call pay for staff. Unfortunately, it was overlooked during last year's budget planning and hadn't been updated to reflect the change for FY24 and FY25.

Water: This line item reflects Town water usage for the facility chlorination disinfection system. In August 2024, a new water meter was installed by the Water Department, when it was discovered that the previous water meter (from the early 80's) was extremely inaccurate in its measurements, causing a huge spike in actual water usage. This update to the line item will help to address that discrepancy for the next chlorination season (April 1-October 31.)

Solid Waste Disposal: Level funded for the year, as the new 3-year hauler contract will go out to bid in the Spring of 2025, and rate is undetermined until that time.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

No major changes this year, operations have remained stable.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

No major challenges to report. The operating budget is able to meet all goals and requirements, especially as it pertains to making sure there is enough funding to keep up with the maintenance demands of the facility as the infrastructure continues to age.

The budgeted surplus and extra revenue have positively impacted the ability to perform anticipated capital replacements annually with the use of retained earnings, which help to stabilize the rates for rate payers.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

Local Limits Study: Currently under contract with Wright-Pierce engineering firm to conduct the study. Preliminary engineering completed and a sample plan has been submitted to EPA for review. Next steps include sampling raw sewage throughout different points in Town, reviewing the findings, making recommendations, and issuing new Industrial permits.

Main Generator: Currently under contract with Collins Electric- Site work has been completed over this fall by CWF staff to include excavation of conduit lines and the pouring concrete pads for both the new generator and transfer switch pad. Inside electrical work will continue throughout January and February, with project completion estimated by the end of February.

Pump Station Generator Replacements x2: Generators were procured and arrived onsite in September 2024. Site work and prep was done by CWF staff at both G St and J St Stations. The facility is working with Haselton Electric as the electrical contractor on the project. Swap over from the old to new generator at G St began the week of Dec 9, 2024, and is anticipated to be completed by Dec 13th. Work will continue over to J St station the following week (Dec 16th) and anticipated to be completed by Dec 20th.

Montague Center Pump Station: Received a proposal from Evenflow Engineering to conduct preliminary engineering on the project. Official work on the project is anticipated to start in the Fall of 2025, as the facility is wrapping up several other timely projects that are due in the Summer of 2025.

General Category: Public Works - CWF

CWF

Dept # 661-440

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5110	Regular Wages	506,684	503,276	531,233	250,103.91	547,874		
5124	Temp Wages		3,825		855.00			
5132	Overtime	46,401	42,263	46,000	30,899.26	46,000		
5140	Other Wages	14,000	24,625	14,000	14,411.65	25,000		
5144	Longevity			1,400		1,700		
5193	Vacation Buy Back							
5194	Sick Leave Buy Back							
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	567,085	573,988	592,633	296,269.82	620,574	620,574	620,574
5211	Electricity TP	173,000	177,233	173,000	89,908.71	173,000		
5211.1	Electricity PS	31,000	30,643	31,000	13,967.39	31,000		
5213	Heating Oil	35,700	28,829	35,700	10,811.98	35,700		
5280	Solid Waste Disposal	318,000	274,138	326,000	118,375.76	326,000		
5300	Professional Services	44,000	55,842	54,000	19,900.75	54,000		
5301	Contracted Lab	7,200	10,096	7,200	7,792.50	7,200		
5304	Industrial Pretreatment	500		500	510.00	500		
5305	SCADA Controls/Comms	45,000	44,975	45,000	15,215.94	45,000		
5310	Safety Equipment & Expenses	6,000	19,608	6,000	8,436.83	6,000		
5319	Corrosion Control		9,291	10,000		10,000		
5320	Professional Development	5,000	8,042	5,000	3,038.67	5,000		
5340	Office Expenses	6,500	6,368	6,500	5,458.53	6,500		
5341	Sewer Bills/Mailing			3,500	1,546.10	3,500		
5360	Grounds	5,000	20,279	5,000	36,269.00	5,000		
5370	Buildings	16,000	15,436	16,000	2,597.24	16,000		
5371	HVAC	6,000	14,154	6,000	7,851.81	6,000		
5400	Other Operational Equipment	60,000	25,718	50,000	120.61	50,000		
5401	Preliminary Equipment and Supplies							
5402	Primary Equipment and Supplies	28,000	31,387	28,000	10,918.46	28,000		
5403	Secondary Equipment and Supplies	7,000	3,671	7,000	2,910.56	7,000		
5404	Solids Handling Equipment and Supplies	21,000	17,148	21,000	3,713.91	21,000		
5406	Water	10,000	15,406	15,000	97,628.20	30,000		
5407	Primary Effluent Screw Pumps Eq/Supplies	1,500	732	1,500		1,500		
5408	Septage Handling							
5409	Odor Control	10,000	3,341	10,000	2,403.93	10,000		
5410	Pump Station Equipment & Supplies	40,000	41,819	40,000	14,766.57	40,000		

General Category: Public Works - CWF

CWF

Dept # 661-440

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5411 Communications							
5415 Oil & Lubricants	4,000		4,000	4,614.95	4,000		
5418 Chlorination	23,360	18,894	23,000	14,681.50	23,000		
5430 CSO							
5440 Other operational Supplies	19,000	20,123	19,000	16,396.93	19,000		
5446 Lab Equipment & Supplies	12,000	15,536	12,000	16,032.84	12,000		
5470 Chemicals (orig budg incl in 5280, 5440)	26,640	37,940	26,640	26,707.79	26,640		
5480 Vehicle Equipment & Supplies	3,000	14,457	3,000	3,217.89	3,000		
5481 Vehicle Fuel	3,000	2,192	3,000	2,194.39	3,000		
5582 Uniforms/Clothing	9,000	12,797	12,600	8,175.15	12,600		
5740 General Insurance	25,000	22,894	25,000	24,630.00	25,000		
5790 Town Overhead	52,512	52,512	50,511	50,511.00	52,807		
5791 TFFD Meter Reading	5,500	5,500	7,500		7,500		
5795 Millers Falls Assessment	236,232	236,232	242,138	60,534.50	248,192		
5796 Millers Falls Overage Charge	55,000		94,668	94,667.83	136,229		
5780 Budgeted Surplus	98,000		98,000		98,000		
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,448,644	1,293,232	1,523,957	796,508.22	1,588,868	1,588,868	1,588,868
5800 Screw Pump Lease Payment	58,500	48,377	58,500	36,282.39	58,500	58,500	58,500
TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY							
TOTAL WPCF	2,074,229	1,915,597	2,175,090	1,129,060.43	2,267,942	2,267,942	2,267,942
				Change	92,852	4.27%	2.30%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Proposed Staffing

Date of Hire	NAGE Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Annual/Hrly Rate	Rate #1 Wks/Hrs	Total Annual	Yrs Svc FY26	Longevity
3/16/2020	Superintendent	H10			105,239.00	6	300
8/26/2024	Admin Asst	B5	21.80	2,088	45,518.40	1	
9/17/2018	WPCF Foreman	F6	34.14	2,088	71,284.32	7	300
9/3/2019	Lead Operator	D7	26.87	2,088	56,104.56	6	300
4/11/2012	Lead Mechanic	E10	30.79	2,088	64,289.52	14	500

General Category: Public Works - CWF

CWF

Dept # 661-440

Date of Hire	Proposed Staffing NAGE Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Annual/Hrly Rate	Rate #1 Wks/Hrs	Total Annual	Yrs Svc FY26	Longevity
9/21/2020	Wastewater Tech	E4	27.06	2,088	56,501.28	5	300
7/8/2024	Laborer	B5	21.91	2,088	45,748.08	1	
1/23/2023	Wastewater Tech	D3	24.45	2,088	51,051.60	3	
11/8/2021	Laboratory Manager	D4	24.94	2,088	52,074.72	4	
	Temporary Wages						

Note: Verizon Wireless pays for 2 cell phones (used by on call staff instead of pagers) and the service for the tablet (used in the field)

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5110 Regular Wages	531,233	547,874	16,641	3.13%	contractual increases, 0% COLA
5124 Temp Wages	-	-	-		
5132 Overtime	46,000	46,000	-		
5140 Other Wages	14,000	25,000	11,000	78.57%	contractual increases
5144 Longevity	1,400	1,700	300	21.43%	contractual increases
5193 Vacation Buy Back	-	-	-		
5194 Sick Leave Buy Back	-	-	-		
5211 Electricity TP	173,000	173,000	-		
5211.1 Electricity PS	31,000	31,000	-		
5213 Heating Oil	35,700	35,700	-		
5280 Solid Waste Disposal	326,000	326,000	-		solids hauler contract out to bid Spring 2025
5300 Professional Services	54,000	54,000	-		
5301 Contracted Lab	7,200	7,200	-		
5304 Industrial Pretreatment	500	500	-		
5305 SCADA Controls/Comms	45,000	45,000	-		
5310 Safety Equipment & Expenses	6,000	6,000	-		
5319 Corrosion Control	10,000	10,000	-		
5320 Professional Development	5,000	5,000	-		
5340 Office Expenses	6,500	6,500	-		
5341 Sewer Bills/Mailing	3,500	3,500	-		
5360 Grounds	5,000	5,000	-		
5370 Buildings	16,000	16,000	-		
5371 HVAC	6,000	6,000	-		
5400 Other Operational Equipment	50,000	50,000	-		
5401 Preliminary Equipment and Supplies	-	-	-		

General Category: Public Works - CWF

CWF

Dept # 661-440

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5402	Primary Equipment and Supplies	28,000	28,000	-		
5403	Secondary Equipment and Supplies	7,000	7,000	-		
5404	Solids Handling Equipment and Supplies	21,000	21,000	-		
5406	Water	15,000	30,000	15,000	100.00%	new meter installed 8/2024, old read low/inacurate
5407	Primary Effluent Screw Pumps Eq/Supplies	1,500	1,500	-		
5408	Septage Handling	-	-	-		
5409	Odor Control	10,000	10,000	-		
5410	Pump Station Equipment & Supplies	40,000	40,000	-		
5411	Communications	-	-	-		
5415	Oil & Lubricants	4,000	4,000	-		
5418	Chlorination	23,000	23,000	-		
5430	CSO	-	-	-		
5440	Other operational Supplies	19,000	19,000	-		
5446	Lab Equipment & Supplies	12,000	12,000	-		
5470	Chemicals (orig budg incl in 5280, 5440)	26,640	26,640	-		
5480	Vehicle Equipment & Supplies	3,000	3,000	-		
5481	Vehicle Fuel	3,000	3,000	-		
5582	Uniforms/Clothing	12,600	12,600	-		
5740	General Insurance	25,000	25,000	-		
5790	Town Overhead	50,511	52,807	2,296	4.55%	
5791	TFFD Meter Reading	7,500	7,500	-		
5795	Millers Falls Assessment	242,138	248,192	6,054	2.50%	2.5% annual increase per contract
5796	Millers Falls Overage Charge	94,668	136,229	41,561	43.90%	
5780	Budgeted Surplus	98,000	98,000	-		ideally 10% of operating budget
5800	Screw Pump Lease Payment	58,500	58,500	-		
Totals		2,175,090	2,267,942	92,852	4.27%	

General Category: Public Works - CWF

Dept # 661-449

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5112	F/T Wages	2,500	528	2,500		2,500		
5132	F/T Wages OT	29,300	13,011	29,300	275.37	29,300		
5142	Shift Differential	1,000		1,000		1,000		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	32,800	13,539	32,800	275.37	32,800		32,800
5249	Other Repairs	1,000		1,000		1,000		
5252	Collection System	4,500	3,800	4,500		4,500		
5271	Easements	1,350	1,550	1,350	1,350.00	1,350		
5277	Rental/Lease Vehicles	1,000		1,000		1,000		
5283	Other Equipment	1,000	202	1,000		1,000		
5303	Engineering/Architectual	300	770	800	800.00	800		
5345	Advertising							
5430	CSO Monitor/Report	25,000	19,327	25,000	4,749.00	25,000		
5443	Misc. Parts/Accessories	5,000	16,005	5,000	8,483.99	5,000		
5530	Public Works Supplies	12,700		12,700		12,700		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	51,850	41,654	52,350	15,382.99	52,350		52,350
5800	Capital Outlay							
	TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	-	-	-	-	-		-
	TOTAL WPCF HWY SUBSIDIARY	84,650	55,193	85,150	15,658.36	85,150	85,150	85,150
Change						-	0.00%	

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5112	F/T Wages	2,500	2,500	-		
5132	F/T Wages OT	29,300	29,300	-		
5142	Shift Differential	1,000	1,000	-		
5249	Other Repairs	1,000	1,000	-		
5252	Collection System	4,500	4,500	-		
5271	Easements	1,350	1,350	-		
5277	Rental/Lease Vehicles	1,000	1,000	-		
5283	Other Equipment	1,000	1,000	-		
5303	Engineering/Architectual	800	800	-		
5430	CSO Monitor/Report	25,000	25,000	-		
5443	Misc. Parts/Accessories	5,000	5,000	-		
5530	Public Works Supplies	12,700	12,700	-		
5800	Capital Outlay	-	-	-		
				-		

Totals

85,150

85,150

-

General Category: Public Works - CWF

CWF DEBT

Dept # 661-700

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
	Long Term Principal							
710-5912	\$589,000 6-15-03 Multi Article			-		-		
710-5913	Acquire 46 Greenfield Rd			-		-		
710-5919	WPCF Gen Obligation 2006	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000.00	10,000		
710-5930	CSO MWPAT #05-22 \$957,448	32,550	32,550	33,208	33,207.60	33,879		
710-5931	CSO MWPAT #05-22A \$1,911,052	37,921	37,921	38,848	38,847.60	39,797		
710-5932	CSO USDA #91-16 \$1,024,000	15,000	15,000	15,000		15,000		
710-5933	CSO USDA #92-18 \$958,000	11,262	11,262	11,727	11,726.45	12,211		
710-5940	Sewer Repair \$1,550,000 7/22/14	75,000	75,000	75,000		80,000		
710-5941	#17 Pump Stations CWP-14-28 \$1.6M	69,787	69,787	71,304	71,304.00	72,853		
710-5942	#16 5/3/14 Sewer Lines \$160K	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000.00	5,000		
710-5943	#12 5/2/15 Sewer Lines \$385k	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000.00	12,000		
710-5945	#30 5/6/17 Sewer Lines \$385	11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000.00	12,000		
710-5946	#15 9/12/13 Sewer Lines	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000.00	3,000		
710-5947	#17 5/3/14 PS #2	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000.00	13,000		
710-5948	WPCF Share #22 5/7/16 Siphon	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000.00	2,000		
	Long Term Principal	296,520	296,520	300,087	210,085.65	310,740	-	-

General Category: Public Works - CWF

CWF DEBT

Dept # 661-700

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
	Long Term Interest							
751-5912	\$589,000 6-15-03 Multi Article			-		-		
751-5913	Acquire 46 Greenfield Rd			-		-		
751-5919	WPCF Gen Obligation 2006	1,400	1,400	1,000	600.00	600		
751-5930	CSO MWPAT #05-22 \$957,448	2,359	2,359	1,701	1,016.49	1,030		
751-5930-100	CSO MWPAT #05-22 \$957,448 Adm	177	177	128	76.24	78		
751-5931	CSO MWPAT #05-22A \$1,911,052	15,890	15,890	14,964	7,716.22	14,015		
751-5931-100	CSO MWPAT #05-22A \$1,911,052 Adm	988	987	930	479.47	871		
751-5932	CSO USDA #91-16 \$1,024,000	13,954	13,954	13,204	6,601.89	12,454		
751-5933	CSO USDA #92-18 \$958,000	19,669	19,668	19,204	19,203.55	18,720		
751-5940	Sewer Repair \$1,550,000 7/22/14	37,400	37,400	35,150	17,575.00	32,338		
751-5941	#17 Pump Stations CWP-14-28 \$1.6M	25,671	25,671	24,260	12,486.44	22,818		
751-5941-100	Pump Stations CWP-14-28 \$1.6M Admn	1,925	1,925	1,819	936.48	1,712		
751-5942	#16 5/3/14 Sewer Lines \$160K	4,517	4,516	4,323	2,195.62	4,185		
751-5943	#12 5/2/15 Sewer Lines \$385k	11,104	11,104	10,639	5,401.88	10,309		
751-5945	#30 5/6/17 Sewer Lines \$385	10,645	10,645	10,219	5,185.00	9,903		
751-5946	#15 9/12/13 Sewer Lines	2,924	2,924	2,808	1,424.38	2,725		
751-5947	#17 5/3/14 PS #2	11,587	11,586	11,122	5,643.13	10,778		
751-5948	WPCF Share #22 5/7/16 Siphon	1,884	1,884	1,807	916.87	1,752		
	Long Term Interest	162,094	162,090	153,278	87,458.66	144,288	-	-
752-5925	Interest on Short Term Notes	25,000		25,000		30,000		
	Short Term Interest	25,000	-	25,000	-	30,000	-	-
	TOTAL CWF DEBT	483,614	458,610	478,365	297,544.31	485,028	485,028	485,028

Change **6,663** 1.39%

General Category: Public Works - CWF

CWF BENEFITS

Dept # 661-910

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5171	Retirement	136,308	115,400	150,519	150,519.00	143,578		
5172	Workers' Compensation	12,000	6,592	12,000	7,992.00	12,000		
5173	Unemployment Compensation	28,000		28,000	415.00	28,000		
5174	Health Insurance	178,000	141,645	180,000	63,896.90	189,000		
5175	Life Insurance	1,100	1,181	1,100	4,254.32	1,100		
5176	Medicare	8,223	7,975	9,100		9,505		
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES		363,631	272,793	380,719	227,077.22	383,183		-
TOTAL CWF BENEFITS		363,631	272,793	380,719	227,077.22	383,183	383,183	383,183

Change 2,464 0.65%

EXPENDITURES	Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5171 Retirement	150,519	143,578	(6,941)	-4.61%	
5172 Workers' Compensation	12,000	12,000	-		
5173 Unemployment Compensation	28,000	28,000	-		
5174 Health Insurance	180,000	189,000	9,000	5.00%	18% increase in ins with room for plan changes
5175 Life Insurance	1,100	1,100	-		
5176 Medicare	9,100	9,505	405	4.45%	Contractual changes

Totals 380,719 383,183 2,464 0.65%



Montague Capital Improvements Committee

May 2025 Annual Town Meeting Report

Approved by the CIC 4/9/2025

I. Background

The Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) received requests and began meeting with Montague department heads and regional school district leaders beginning in December 2024 to evaluate capital needs as outlined in their Special Article Requests. The Special Article Request forms that were adopted and implemented in 2017 continue to serve as the framework for presenting the capital needs of each department.

In this report of the CIC's FY2026 recommendations, we summarize the committee's findings based on several months of meetings, research, and deliberation. The grading system, shown in Section II, is consistent with that used in past years.

This year the CIC initially received twenty (20) capital article requests. Over the course of four months, the proposers were brought in for presentation and discussion of their requests. Through these discussions and review of additional information, some requests were reformulated, combined, disaggregated, withdrawn, or otherwise modified. This report presents the final slate of seventeen (17) capital requests and the CIC's recommendations following its investigation into said requests.

Important note on CIC's process:

--The unanimous votes you will see on these Capital Articles reflect the committee's thoroughness and persistence in investigating each article. This includes pursuing information on every possible alternative to each proposed expenditure, and demanding convincing evidence regarding the needs, legal requirements, timing, and impact to the Town's residents and employees of each proposed Article.

II. Approach to Evaluation of Requested Articles

Defined Criteria/Rationale Used in Assessing Special Article Requests

Public Safety: Does the capital improvement rectify a safety concern or otherwise prevent a potential public safety issue?

Cost Avoidance: Will the capital improvement serve the Town financially?

Service Interruption: Does the capital improvement prevent an interruption in services?

Other: Any other reason identified as relevant by the CIC.

Grading System

Recommend: Given appropriate budget space, the committee believes that the capital improvement should be funded. The CIC evaluation does not formally consider the question of financial capacity, which is left to the Finance Committee and Selectboard.

Recommend with Reservations: The committee would generally recommend the capital improvement but may find that elements of the project scope are unclear or incomplete, that it lacks a convincing professional cost estimate, or doesn't address or account for some long-term needs and concerns of the town.

Does not Recommend: The committee does not recommend moving forward with the capital improvement as presented. This may be due to the nature or timing of the project, the apparent need for the project, the availability of scope or cost information, or other reasons.

III. Recommendations on Requested Articles

1. Summary Table of Fiscal Year 2026 Submissions and Recommendations

The table below offers a summary view of special article requests and CIC recommendations for FY26 capital project spending. Overall, spending associated with recommended articles equals \$4,766,370. These recommendations are further explained in section II.

Summary of Final Motions/Recommendations

Request	Amount	Approved	Vote
Clean Water Facility- Purchase Used Mini-Excavator	\$ 60,000	Yes	4-0
Clean Water Facility- Portable Emergency Generator	\$ 30,000	Yes	4-0
Clean Water Facility- Lake Pleasant Station Generator	\$ 37,800	Yes	4-0
Clean Water Facility- Thickened Sludge Pump Replacement (x2)	\$ 104,000	Yes	4-0
Public Works/Selectboard- Phase 2 – Sewer Collection System Rehabilitation	\$ 3,000,000	Yes	4-0
Public Works- Replace 2003 International 7400 10 Wheel Dump Truck	\$ 365,000	Yes	4-0
Public Works- Replace 2002 International 4900 Dump Truck	\$ 325,000	Yes	4-0
Public Works- Replace 2001 Ford E450 Camera Van	\$ 70,000	Yes	4-0
Public Works- Replace 2007 Ford F-150 Pickup	\$ 65,000	Yes	5-0
Public Works- Oakman St Slope Stabilization	\$ 60,000	Yes	5-0
Public Works- Meadow Rd Guardrail Work	\$ 200,000	Yes	5-0
Public Works- Equipment and Major Repairs (Discretionary)	\$ 36,470	Yes	5-0
Public Works- Alley and Non-Ch90 Road Paving	\$ 30,000	Yes	5-0
Millers Falls Library Storefront Renovation	\$ 39,000	Yes	5-0

Unity Park Playground Improvements	\$ 125,000	Yes	5-0
FRTA Bus Stop Improvements (Industrial Blvd/Millers Falls Rd)	\$ 60,000	Yes	5-0
Montague Center Complete Streets Design	\$ 91,200	Yes	5-0
Keith Footbridge Abatement	\$ 67,900	Yes	5-0

2. FY26 Articles Recommended for Consideration by Annual Town Meeting

Clean Water Facility Purchase Used Mini-Excavator (\$60,000)

The CWF performs many on-site and off-site routine updates and special projects requiring the use of an excavator. The facility is also responsible for managing its own groundskeeping, excavation, and lifting work when necessary. The CWF has borrowed other municipal excavators and spent over \$25,000 on the rental of a small excavator to perform site work on multiple projects for calendar year 2024, and would rather invest in owning a used excavator to use whenever needed.

Cost avoidance: This equipment will create cost-savings by allowing the department to avoid rental costs, which would otherwise be needed frequently for staff to handle in-house projects.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

CWF Portable Emergency Generator (\$30,000)

The current back-up portable generator is circa 1981 and is overdue for replacement. A recent inspection performed by the service technician, PowerGen Technologies LLC, has recommended replacement, as parts on the 1981 generators have become obsolete and cannot be replaced if the generators fail.

DEP/MGL also requires operable and serviceable generators at all wastewater pumping stations in order to prevent a backup and discharge of untreated sewage during power outages. The portable generator is a redundant back-up power supply to any out-of-service fixed generators located at any of the eight (8) pump stations.

Public Safety: A portable generator is needed in case of emergencies or inoperability of any of the fixed-location generators at the wastewater pumping stations. If a fixed-location generator fails, the portable unit is deployed to keep the system functioning, preventing unsanitary and costly backups and discharges of untreated sewage.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade. **Recommend***

CWF Lake Pleasant Station Generator (\$37,800)

As part of the planned continuation of the nine (9) pump station generator replacements, including stationary generators at each of the eight (8) pump stations, and one (1) portable unit, this generator serves the Lake Pleasant Road pump station in Lake Pleasant and is circa 1981. The current generator at this station was originally a portable generator that was made semi-permanent due to a previously failed stationary generator.

An inspection performed by the service technician, PowerGen Technologies LLC, has recommended replacement, as parts on the 1981 generators have become obsolete and cannot be replaced if the generators fail.

DEP/MGL also requires operable and serviceable generators at all wastewater pumping stations in order to prevent a backup and discharge of untreated sewage during power outages.

Public Safety: A replacement generator is needed to keep the system functioning in case of power outages or interruptions, preventing unsanitary and costly backups and discharges of untreated sewage.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

CWF Thickened Sludge Pumps Replacement x2 (\$104,000)

The CWF has historically utilized three (3) thickened sludge pumps to pump sludge from the gravity thickener and two (2) sludge holding tanks—to feed liquid sludge to the press for dewatering, and/or feed liquid sludge to a 9,000-gallon tanker for disposal.

Since the loss of the Turners Falls papermills, the facility no longer needs all three (3) pumps, needing only the use of two (2). (Redundancy is required as per Massachusetts law).

The old pumps are piston-style pumps circa 1981, with replacement drives from 2010. These are an outdated and extremely dangerous pump style, having exterior rotating parts which pose a serious safety risk of death or serious injury to staff. This concern was mentioned in a Dept of Labor Standards/OSHA inspection in February 2024.

The update will replace two (2) of the pumps with an appropriate pump style, replace some of the deteriorated piping on both the inlet and discharge sides of each pump with stainless steel, and will update controls. CWF staff will procure the equipment and perform the demolition and installation of the pumps in-house. The third pump will be completely removed from service and disposed of as per Town Policy/Mass. General Laws.

If the pumps are not replaced, they face imminent failure, which would prevent the facility from removing sludge/solids, which would in turn cause significant non-compliance with permitted solids removal requirements of the EPA/MA DEP.

Public Safety: The current piston-style system is outdated and no longer considered safe for CWF staff. In addition, the risk of inoperability of the facility if the pumps were to fail creates an environmental and health hazard to the Connecticut River, while also burdening the Town with liability for fines and penalties.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

Phase 2 – Sewer Collection System Rehabilitation (\$3,000,000)

As part of the Town's combined sewer overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) update, the Town contracted with the engineering firm Wright-Pierce to develop short and long-term implementation plans for improving the maintenance, operation, and condition of its wastewater collection system. The requested funding is needed to complete the work that has been designated as either Priority 1 or Priority 2 in need of completion. Completing this work within a 10-year period is a condition of the Town's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, meaning that implementing this rehabilitation is the Town's legal obligation.

This work includes the rehabilitation of 15 underground pipes (4,867 linear ft.) in Turners Falls, as well as 22 similar pipes (4,592 linear ft.) in Millers Falls, and the rehabilitation of 74 manholes in Millers Falls.

This Phase (2) is a continuation of the ongoing Phase 1, which is expected to be completed by Spring 2025, and includes the rehabilitation of 53 manholes. Phase 1 has been funded through a \$500,000 Rural / Small Town Development Grant from the state.

Service Interruption: The Town is obligated under its NPDES permit to implement the repairs identified in the LTCP. The work identified by the project engineer as being Priority 1 or 2 is essential to the continued functionality of the Town's wastewater collection system, of which much of the current infrastructure is 75-100 years old.

Currently, several areas of excessive inflow and infiltration of stormwater and other runoff into the sewer system lead to undue strain on operations by increasing the overall volume of water in the system. Especially during heavy rainfall events, this also increases the likelihood of CSO discharges, which are an environmental and health hazard, and can further expose the Town to liability for noncompliance with its NPDES permit.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

DPW Replace 2003 International 7400 10-Wheel Dump Truck (\$365,000)

At 22 years old, the current truck has reached the end of its useful life. Replacement of this vehicle is needed for year-round highway maintenance including clearing winter roads and hauling construction materials to and from job sites.

Service Interruption: Purchase will replace an aging 2003 International 7400 with wing plow and spreader. The truck has undergone significant repairs including replacement of the dump body in 2017. This replacement request follows the Town's Capital Improvement Plan, which recommends a 20-year replacement cycle for large dump trucks to help the Town avoid

unpredictable repair costs, service interruptions, and difficulty finding parts for outdated vehicles.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

DPW Replace 2002 International 4900 6-Wheel Dump Truck (\$325,000)

At 23 years old, the current truck has reached the end of its useful life. Replacement of this vehicle is needed for year-round highway maintenance including clearing winter roads and hauling construction materials to and from job sites.

Service Interruption: Purchase will replace an aging 2002 International 4900 with plow and spreader. This replacement request follows the Town's Capital Improvement Plan, which recommends a 20-year replacement cycle for large dump trucks to help the Town avoid unpredictable repair costs, service interruptions, and difficulty finding parts for outdated vehicles.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

DPW Replace 2001 E450 Camera Van (\$70,000)

The DPW's camera van contains special closed-circuit television (CCTV) equipment, allowing staff to monitor the Town's sewer collection system for problems as well as for regular inspection reports. The current van dates back to 2001, and was originally an ambulance prior to its acquisition by the department. This purchase will replace the current van with a new vehicle.

Service Interruption: The 2001 van is beyond the Capital Improvement Plan's recommended 12-year replacement cycle for most vehicles to help the Town avoid unpredictable repair costs, service interruptions, and difficulty finding parts for outdated vehicles.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

DPW Replace 2007 Ford F-150 pickup (\$65,000)

The DPW currently utilizes a 2007 Ford F-150 for use primarily by its custodian to travel between Town buildings while transporting cleaning supplies and equipment. The truck is also used at various times for the movement of furniture and goods between Town facilities. This purchase will replace the current truck with a new vehicle. Additionally, the department views this vehicle as an excellent opportunity for electrification, and intends to pursue grant funding to replace it with an electric vehicle.

Service Interruption: The 2007 truck is beyond the Capital Improvement Plan's recommended 12-year replacement cycle for most vehicles to help the Town avoid unpredictable repair costs, service interruptions, and difficulty finding parts for outdated vehicles.

Montague CIC: FY26 Capital Project Recommendations

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

DPW Vehicles and Equipment Fund (\$36,470)

This fund provides accessible funding for the DPW superintendent to fund purchases of and/or major repairs to DPW vehicles and equipment that are needed unexpectedly between Town Meetings. Expenditures from this fund are governed by a longtime policy that was revised and adopted formally in 2022. This policy requires Selectboard approval for any expenditure exceeding \$25,000.

The policy also indicates that the fund should be replenished at Annual Town Meeting to an amount not to exceed \$100,000, based on the amount in the fund as of March 1. Due to the high volume of other DPW capital requests for FY26, the Selectboard voted to recommend the fund be replenished to the reduced level of \$75,000.

Based on a balance of \$38,530 in the DPW discretionary account as of March 1, this appropriation is expected to return the total DPW discretionary fund balance to approximately \$75,000 at the end of the current fiscal year.

The DPW vehicle/equipment inventory is current and in good condition. No large unexpected expenses are predicted, but they may still occur.

Service Interruption: Should a vehicle or large piece of equipment fail (without this appropriation) it is quite possible that said equipment could remain out of service, potentially hindering snow removal or disrupting time-sensitive construction projects while the Town identifies a method to appropriate funding to repair or replace.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

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

The condition of most of our alleyways is poor to fair. Alleys have been traditionally under-maintained because they are not eligible for state Chapter 90 funds (traditionally the source for funding street and road paving repairs). The alleys are important for public safety and sanitation.

The DPW intends to conduct the paving “in-house” using DPW equipment and labor.

Public Safety: The alleys in the densely developed downtown are important for public safety and sanitation.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

Millers Falls Library Storefront Renovation (\$39,000)

Recent improvements to this Library branch have included new HVAC installation and replacement of both the windows and backdoor. A remaining obstacle to the building's energy efficiency is the glass storefront on the front of the building.

The storefront leaks cold air in the summer and hot air in the winter. The glass makes the immediate area around it quite hot from the spring through early fall, and also creates a “fishbowl” effect that is uncomfortable for some library staff and patrons. Additionally, the front door regularly lets in water during heavy rains, which has led to interior floor damage. The current door also does not meet accessibility requirements.

This project will replace the storefront with a regular building façade, incorporating large but standard-sized windows in keeping with the aesthetic of the neighborhood, and an ADA-compliant automatic front door. This project is estimated to cost \$39,000.

Cost Avoidance: This project will create cost savings in the form of reduced energy consumption for the building. It will also help prevent expensive repairs from the continued infiltration of water into the building via the entryway.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

Unity Park Playground Improvements (\$125,000)

This project will replace the rubber, pour-in-place (PIP) ground surface and the tube slide in the Unity Park playground. The current PIP surface is beyond its useful life and has been cracking and pulling up in numerous areas due to high traffic. Approximately 2,500 sq. feet of PIP surfacing must be replaced. A new tube slide will replace the current one that was purchased and installed in 2000 and is also beyond its useful life.

Unity Park is not only the most popular public park in Montague, but is also one of the most popular play areas in Franklin County. The playground receives constant patronage, which speaks to the importance of committing to routine maintenance. The life of rubber pour-in-place surfacing is approximately 10 years, and the current PIP surface was installed 13 years ago during Phase 1 of the Unity Park Improvement Project.

The replacement of this surface is not only critical to the safety of our patrons but also meets ADA regulations for public play spaces. Attempts have been made to patch torn areas, but these efforts have yielded less-than-acceptable results.

The current blue tube slide is one of the most popular and beloved items in the playground area. Unfortunately, it is also quite old, and even pre-dates the tenure of the Parks & Recreation Director. It was installed in the year 2000. The accepted life of playground equipment is approximately 15 years. The Parks & Recreation Department has been spending more time, energy and resources attempting to maintain the slide than is practical or safe, and this item should be replaced to ensure the safety of all users.

Montague CIC: FY26 Capital Project Recommendations

Public Safety: If not replaced, the worn PIP surface constitutes a tripping hazard, and the dated tube slide will present a possible safety risk for patrons of the park.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

FRTA Bus Stop Improvements (Industrial Blvd/Millers Falls Rd) (\$60,000)

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) was awarded a grant from MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces program in the amount of \$178,376 to fund improvements to the two bus stops on either side of Millers Falls Road at the intersection with Industrial Boulevard. Proposed improvements included four possible alternates, consisting of either Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) or HAWK Beacons for pedestrian crossing, and of either Simme-Seats or bus shelters for the comfort and convenience of transit users.

A deficit of \$57,287 exists between the grant award and the project engineer's opinion of probable cost for the least expensive of the four alternates, which includes RRFBs and Simme-Seats. As a result, the FRTA is now approaching the Town and other stakeholder organizations, such as the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA), to request assistance with funding this shortfall.

If the FRTA is unable to secure sufficient additional funds to support the project, there is a risk that the grant funds would need to be surrendered and the project would not move forward. Under current economic circumstances, there is no guarantee a future grant opportunity will be available.

The project as designed would improve safety for all users at a bus stop location served by two bus routes (23, 32), at an intersection which serves the Industrial Park and becomes quite busy during peak hours.

Public Safety: The current configuration of this intersection lacks any pedestrian facilities, despite the fact that the bus stops on both sides of the street are utilized by passengers of two bus routes which experienced a combined ridership of over 28,000 during FY24. At present, these two bus stops on a 40-mph road do not even have a crosswalk painted on the pavement where passengers get onto and off the buses. Riders looking to access the Airport Industrial Park, Franklin County Technical School, or the Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority from the eastbound stop must cross Millers Falls Road, which is not safe to do under present conditions.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

Montague Center Complete Streets Design (\$91,200)

The Town applied for and was awarded the sum of \$499,682.80 from MassDOT's Complete Streets program to support three improvements in Montague Center. These include safety improvements alongside North Street, Main Street, and the Town Common; bicycle accommodations on Main Street; and improvements at the FRTA bus stop on Main Street in Montague Center. While the grant is eligible to fund construction-phase services, including administration and oversight, other necessary expenses must come from other sources.

The Town has received quotes to provide the additional services that are necessary for the projects to move forward. Items that require funding include Final Design (\$74,400), Project Specifications (\$6,400), and Bid Documents and Bid Tabs (\$10,400), totaling \$91,200.

The substantial award from MassDOT for these three projects in Montague Center presents a rare opportunity to leverage outside resources for improving vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety in the village center. Allowing these projects to advance presents significant cost savings as compared to the Town relying on its own capital funds to cover nearly \$500,000 worth of construction costs on these essential improvements.

This area has been the subject of intensive concern and discussions for several years by neighborhood residents with the Planning Board and Selectboard, related to local traffic safety. Community input has identified traffic calming and bike/pedestrian safety improvements as top priorities.

Public Safety: The high speed of motorists travelling through the Montague Center village has been a topic of concern among local residents for several years. The primary motivation behind the Town's successful grant application was to implement traffic-calming measures that will improve the safety of the road for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and bicyclists, reducing the risk of serious and fatal collisions.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Recommend***

Keith Footbridge Abatement (\$67,900)

As part of the proposed demolition project of the former Strathmore Mill site at 20 Canal Road, the Keith footbridge, spanning the Power Canal and connecting the complex to Canal Street, will need to be removed.

The footbridge is owned by FirstLight Hydro Generating Co., which has agreed to fund and procure construction services for its removal. However, the Town is responsible for mitigating hazardous materials on the Town-owned utility lines which are located on this bridge. The requested funds are necessary for the engineering and abatement to remove asbestos-containing materials from the Town's utility lines on the footbridge.

After the removal of hazardous materials, DPW staff will cut and cap the utility lines, after which the bridge will be ready for removal by FirstLight's contractors.

Montague CIC: FY26 Capital Project Recommendations

Public Safety: The demolition project for the former Strathmore Mill complex in the Canal District of Turners Falls is based on the threat posed to the community by the presence of these unsafe and decaying structures. The buildings on the site are in the initial stages of collapse, and must be addressed in a timely fashion to prevent immense harm to the health and safety of residents, as well as to the ecology of the Connecticut River, should an unplanned collapse occur. Abatement of hazardous materials on the Town-owned utility lines of the Keith footbridge is a necessary prerequisite to further work.

FY27 Preview

The CIC discussed several projects in great detail that are not included in the FY26 slate of capital requests. These articles were not ready for the CIC to recommend to tonight's Annual Town Meeting, but the CIC expects to receive and review updated requests for upcoming Town Meetings.

- GMRSD Sheffield Admin repointing/exterior work
- GMRSD Sheffield Admin window replacements
- GMRSD Sheffield Admin ADA restrooms
- GMRSD New Elementary School Feasibility Study (match for leveraging MSBA grant)
- CWF Secondary and primary clarifiers upgrade
- Off-road sewer lines relining
- Swamp Road bridge rehab match (for leveraging MassDOT Small Bridge grant)
- Avenue A traffic signal replacements (2)

6 Year Capital Plan

The updated 6-Year Capital Plan is in the process of being developed. The CIC is currently taking inventory from all existing studies of capital assets (facilities, utilities, roads, vehicles, etc.) to develop a central, prioritized capital plan with a 6-year planning horizon.

Respectfully,

Gregory Garrison, Chair

Jason Burbank

Ariel Elan

Chris Menegoni

Lynn Reynolds

RECOMMENDED WAGES BY POSITION

<u>Position</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Budg Wages</u>	FY26
Select Board			
Town Administrator	4	111,427.00	
Assistant Town Adminstrator	2	96,417.00	
Executive Assistant	10	56,262.95	
Admin. Assistant	6	23,376.65	
Town Accountant			
Town Accountant	10	82,394.00	
Board of Assessors			
Director of Assessing	10	82,394.00	
Assessing Technician	7	41,671.52	
Treasurer/Tax Collector			
Treasurer/Tax Collector	10	82,394.00	
Assistant Treas/Tax Collector	9	50,850.59	
Town Clerk			
Town Clerk	7	78,160.00	Incl stipends
Assistant Town Clerk	8	49,899.77	
Administrative Assistant	2	37,008.84	
Planning & Comm Dev			
Director of Planning	10	82,394.00	
Assistant Planner	8	49,899.77	
Police*			
Chief	10	138,916.80	
Lieutenant	10	118,598.40	
Staff Sergeant	5	105,119.38	
Sergeant	5	90,865.80	
Sergeant	5	75,721.50	
Sergeant	5	83,293.65	
Sergeant	5	75,721.50	
Detective	8	78,144.83	
Detective	8	85,248.90	
SRO Patrolman	8	65,491.00	
SRO Patrolman	8	65,491.00	
Patrolman	8	78,589.20	
Patrolman	1	54,747.00	
Patrolman	8	65,491.00	
Patrolman	1	59,724.00	
Patrolman	8	72,040.10	
Patrolman	1	54,747.00	
Patrolman	6	72,711.60	
Custodian	10	16,805.30	15 hrs/wk + 35

*Amt includes Incentive Pay for eligible employees

RECOMMENDED WAGES BY POSITION

<u>Position</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>FY26 Budg Wages</u>
Dispatch		
Dispatch Supervisor/Office Adm	10	64,247.76
Communications Officer	1	45,760.75
Communications Officer	9	54,924.75
Communications Officer	10	56,307.25
Communications Officer	10	56,307.25
Communications Officer	4	49,256.50
Building Inspector		
Inspector of Buildings	6	75,746.00
Administrative Assistant	4	38,910.48
DPW		
Superintendent	7	98,687.00
Office Manager	9	62,741.80
Working Foreman	9	75,637.10
Shop Foreman	8	61,550.50
Lead Mechanic	7	56,158.30
Building Maintenance	10	54,674.40
Building Maintenance	2	45,750.10
Custodian	10	43,095.80
Lead Grounds Maintenance	10	59,585.90
Grounds Maintenance	4	48,049.10
Grounds Maintenance	4	48,049.10
Landfill Attendent	5	14,500.20 14 hrs/wk
Collection System Lead Operator	6	59,439.60
Heavy Equipment Lead Operator	6	59,585.90
Heavy Equipment Operator	7	56,158.30
Heavy Equipment Operator	6	55,071.50
Truck Driver/Laborer	3	46,920.50
Truck Driver/Laborer	3	46,920.50
Truck Driver/Laborer	2	45,750.10
Truck Driver/Laborer	10	54,674.40
Truck Driver/Laborer	5	49,303.10

RECOMMENDED WAGES BY POSITION

<u>Position</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>FY26</u> <u>Budg Wages</u>	
Board of Health			
Director of Health	6	75,746.00	
Administrative Assistant	6	40,903.55	
Council on Aging			
Director of COA	10	46,556.68	20 hrs/wk
Administrative Assistant	10	18,962.00	15 hrs/wk
Libraries			
Library Director	10	82,394.00	
Children's Librarian	10	59,716.79	includes stipend
Library Technician	9	43,336.44	
Library Assistant I	7	26,424.11	26 hrs/wk
Library Assistant I	10	9,959.46	13 hrs/wk
Library Assistant I	10	29,899.00	28.5 hrs/wk
Library Assistant I	7	21,398.31	21 hrs/wk
Library Assistant I	6	16,016.77	16 hrs/wk
Library Assistant I	9	12,856.68	7.55 hrs/wk
Library Assistant I	2	12,757.31	6 hrs/wk
Library Assistant I	3	13,099.09	13 hrs/wk
Childrens' Prog Asst	2	15,220.48	13.5 hrs/wk
Parks and Recreation			
Director of Parks & Recreation	10	82,394.00	
Administrative Assistant	10	25,282.40	20 hrs/wk
Airport			
Airport Manager	3	66,523.68	40 hrs/wk
Operations Manager	3	50,801.04	40 hrs/wk
CWF-Current Staffing			
Superintendent	10	105,239.00	
WPCF Foreman	6	71,284.32	
Lead Operator	7	56,104.56	
Lead Mechanic	10	64,289.52	
Wastewater Technician	4	56,501.28	
Laborer	5	45,748.08	
Wastewater Technician	3	51,051.60	
Lab Manager	4	52,074.72	
Administrative Assistant	5	45,518.40	

Revenue Estimates for FY2026	FY2024 Budget Estimates	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Budget Estimates	FY2025 Actual	FY2026 Proposed Budget Estimates
<u>Tax Levy</u>					
Prior Year Limit	21,041,319	21,041,319	21,944,209	21,944,209	22,716,273
2.50%	526,033	526,033	548,605	548,605	567,907
New Growth	75,000	376,857	75,000	223,459	200,000
Debt Exclusion	1,205,071	1,205,068	1,204,232	1,205,984	1,203,580
Excess Capacity	(1,149,544)	(1,241,751)	(1,149,544)	(1,447,268)	(1,094,528)
Subtotal Tax Levy	21,697,879	21,907,526	22,622,502	22,474,989	23,593,232
Less Allowance for A&E	(101,000)	(400,781)	(400,000)	(223,557)	(400,000)
Net Levy	21,596,879	21,506,745	22,222,502	22,251,433	23,193,232
<u>State Aid</u>					
				Cherry Sheet	Est
Unrestricted Aid	1,649,976	1,713,276	1,764,674	1,764,674	1,803,497
Veterans' Benefits	66,176	40,519	25,468	25,468	76,475
Exemptions V/B/SS/Eld	36,734	36,872	36,701	33,177	53,789
State Owned Land	257,893	366,300	368,422	375,484	375,484
Chapter 70 (Smith Vo-Tech)		9,046		9,046	9,046
Public Libraries	18,651	25,647	25,647	28,400	28,852
less offset	(18,651)	(25,647)	(25,647)	(28,400)	(28,852)
Subtotal Cherry Sheet	2,010,779	2,166,013	2,195,265	2,207,849	2,318,291
Less State Charges	(95,793)	(104,836)	(110,000)	(106,651)	(115,365)
Net State Revenue	1,914,986	2,061,177	2,085,265	2,101,198	2,202,926
<u>Local Receipts</u>					
				Recap Budget	
Motor Vehicle Excise	778,490	859,408	775,000	775,000	798,250
Other Excise	-	-	-	-	-
Meals Tax	71,000	76,718	71,000	71,000	72,775
Penalties & Interest	137,000	149,190	137,000	137,000	140,425
PILOT	15,500	16,396	14,000	14,000	14,350
Charges for Trash Disposal	304,000	295,082	275,000	275,000	280,500
Rental - 50% of Kearsarge + other rer	86,235	86,235	70,769	70,769	79,831
Other Charges for Service	67,000	85,695	59,000	59,000	60,180
Building Permits	112,000	120,292	109,000	109,000	112,270
Licenses & Permits	57,500	59,391	46,000	46,000	47,380
Fines & Forfeits	10,000	12,249	8,000	8,000	8,080
Investment Income	10,000	59,926	2,000	2,000	10,000
FCTS reimb for SRO-shown below					
Miscellaneous Recurring	67,030	101,047	79,058	79,058	84,597
Misc. Non-Recurring		281,898			
Total Local Receipts For AA	1,715,755	2,203,526	1,645,827	1,645,827	1,708,638
Other Local Receipts					
FCTS SRO Reimb	77,500	78,540	77,500	77,500	77,500
GMRSD SRO Reimb	65,000	66,300	65,000	65,000	-
50% Kearsarge Lease	85,235	85,235	70,769	70,769	79,831
Grand Total Local Receipts	1,943,490	2,433,601	1,859,096	1,859,096	1,865,969

Revenue Estimates for FY2026	FY2024 Budget Estimates	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Budget Estimates	FY2025 Actual	FY2026 Proposed Budget Estimates
Available Funds					
Existing Sp Art Balances	12,099	12,099			
Capital Stabilization	100,000	100,000	228,500	228,500	325,000
CWF Capital Stabilization					
GMRSD Stabilization					
FCTS Stabilization					
Cannabis Impact Stabilization			-		60,000
Canal District Utility Impr Stab					67,900
Transportation Infrastructure	7	7			
Res for Excluded Debt			487	487	
Town Stabilization for Sp Articles					
Town Stabilization For GM					
Town Gen Stab to make up for lost Rev					
Sale of RE & Chapter 90			26,041	26,041	23,372
Overlay Surplus	250,000	250,000			
Receipts Res for Approp	53,250	53,250	52,250	52,250	52,250
Total Available Funds	415,356	415,356	307,278	307,278	528,522
Free Cash					
Individual Articles	2,180,701	2,180,701	314,000	314,000	1,255,200
Reduce Levy					
Total Free Cash	2,180,701	2,180,701	314,000	314,000	1,255,200
	-	-			-
Grand Total General Revenue	28,051,412	28,597,580	26,788,141	26,833,005	29,045,849
less available funds	25,455,355	26,001,523	26,166,863	26,211,727	27,262,127
Borrowing					
Town			836,500	836,500	1,800,000
CWF			283,800	283,800	1,200,000
Total Borrowing	-	-	1,120,300	1,120,300	3,000,000
Sewer User Fees	2,719,224	2,963,720	2,759,825		2,841,377
CWF Cap Stabilization	50,136	50,136			
Sewer Retained Earnings	352,364	352,364			231,800
Airport User Fees	426,965	227,094	286,043		302,964
Grand Total All Sources	31,549,965	32,140,758	30,954,309	27,953,305	35,421,990

Current Balance of
Free Cash & Reserves

As of		3/31/2025				
Art #	Description	Free Cash	CFW Retained Earnings	Colle RRA	Sale of Real Estate	Town Capital Stabilization
ATM	Balance before meeting	1,307,026	310,113	319,326	525,363	2,586,368
6	Airport Operating Budget				(23,372)	
8	Colle Operating Budget			(52,250)		
13	Library ADA	(10,000)				
14	Mini Excavator		(60,000)			
14	Portable Emergency Generator		(30,000)			
14	Lake Pleasant Generator		(37,800)			
14	Thickened Sludge Pump		(104,000)			
16	10 Wheel Dump Truck	(365,000)				
17	Dump Truck					(325,000)
18	Camera Van	(70,000)				
18	Pickup Truck	(65,000)				
19	Oakman St Slope Stabilization	(60,000)				
19	Alley and Non Ch-90 Paving	(30,000)				
20	Meadow Rd Guardrail	(200,000)				
22	Miller Falls Library Storefront	(39,000)				
22	Unity Park Playground Improvements	(125,000)				
22	Montague Center Complete Streets	(91,200)				
23	FRTA bus stop improvements					
24	Keith Footbridge					
25	Town Capital Stabilization	(100,000)				
25	GMRSD Capital Stabilization	(50,000)				
25	OPEB Trust	(50,000)				
	Ending Balance	<u>51,826</u>	<u>78,313</u>	<u>267,076</u>	<u>501,991</u>	<u>2,261,368</u>

FY26 Finance Policy Guidelines/Calculations

FY24 Operating Revenues:			
Net Levy less excluded debt PLUS actual State Aid PLUS local estimated receipts			
	Net Levy		Source
	Gross Levy	21,907,526.09	Recap P1
	Allow A & E	(400,780.84)	Recap p 2
	Excluded Debt	<u>(1,205,071.00)</u>	Recap DE1
#1	Levy to use	20,301,674.25	
For Actual State Aid plus local receipts, backed into #:			
	Total GF Rev	26,868,083.54	EOY Budget Report
	Transfers In	(553,589.50)	EOY Budget Report
	PP revenue	(3,934,830.66)	EOY Budget Report
	RE revenue	(17,755,465.28)	EOY Budget Report
	Tax Lien/Foreclosure re	<u>(93,873.27)</u>	EOY Budget Report
#2	State Aid + LER	4,530,324.83	
FY24 General Operating Revenues (PYGOR)			
	Sum of #1, #2	24,831,999.08	

Total Stabilization Funds plus Free Cash shall be maintained at 5-10% of PYGOR			
	FY24 GOR	24,831,999.08	
	5%	1,241,600.00	Minimum
	10%	2,483,200.00	Maximum
		1,388,324.00	Free Cash 7/1/24
		<u>4,033,515.79</u>	Available Stabilizations 7/1/24 (non-sewer)
		5,421,839.79	Total
			21.83% % of PYGOR

General Stabilization Fund to be maintained at minimum of 5% PYGOR			
	FY26 Minimum	1,241,600.00	
	Current balance	<u>1,288,747.99</u>	5.19%
	need to add	(47,147.99)	

Annually appropriate 0.3% of PYGOR to General Stabilization as part of operating budget	
.3% PYGOR	74,496.00

Capital Improvement Stabilization Fund :should have annual appropriation of 0.2% PYGOR	
.2% PYGOR	49,664.00

FY26 Finance Policy Guidelines/Calculations

In Annual Budget, Debt Service plus PAYGO Cap Projects should be 6-8% of PYGOR
 This should only include items paid with TAXATION

		Debt Only	Non-Excluded Debt Only
4% PYGOR	993,280.00		
6% PYGOR	1,489,920.00		
8% PYGOR	1,986,560.00		
Uses:			
Town LTD Princ	784,259.00	784,259.00	1,102,491.00 From DE-1
Town LTD Int	355,766.00	355,766.00	
GMRSD Debt	101,088.00	101,088.00	
Cruiser	-		
DPW Equip (Est)	36,470.00		
Total requests exceed amt needed			
Need to meet Min	212,337.00		
Total	1,489,920.00	1,241,113.00	1,102,491.00
			5.00% Debt s/b 4-6% PYGOR
Need to meet max	708,977.00	greatly exceeds current available Taxation	

PAYGO Building Renewal & Equipment Replacement will be budgeted at 2% of **Budget** year est GOR
 FY25 Operating Revenues: Net Levy less excluded debt + actual State Aid + local estimated receipts

Revenue Projections Detail		Uses:	
Net Levy	23,193,232.00	36,470.00	DPW Equip (Est)
Less Excl Debt	(1,203,580)	-	
Net State Aid	2,202,926.00		
Est Rec	1,865,969.00		
Total Budgeted GOR	26,058,547.00		
		-	Cruiser
2% Budgeted GOR	521,171.00	36,470.00	Total
		484,701.00	Available for PAYGO Bldg/equip

Debt:

GF Debt Service/PYGOR			
Town LTD Princ	784,259.00		
Town LTD Int	355,766.00		
GF Debt	1,140,025.00		
Ratio	4.59%		
Maximum	15%		
Net GF Debt Svc less Excluded Debt			
Total GF Debt	1,140,025.00		
Less GF Excluded debt	(1,102,492.00)		
Net GF Debt	37,533.00		
ratio	0.15%	Under Minimum	
Minimum	2%		
Maximum	5%		

FY26 Affordable Assessment Calculation

Current Allocation Methodology Summary	Original Estimated Revenue		
Net Levy (Total less allowance for Abatements)	23,193,232		
Less Excluded Debt (+ GMRSD Debt for town bldgs)	(1,203,580)		
Available Levy	<u>21,989,652</u>		
Net State Aid (Total less Charges & Offsets)	2,202,926		
Local Receipts	1,708,638		
Free Cash recommended for Operating Expenses	-		
Total Available Sources for Operating Expenses	<u><u>25,901,216</u></u>		
Total Sources for GMRSD Operating			
48.5 % of Available Sources to GMRSD Operating	12,562,090		
Montague's share Excluded GMRSD Debt	101,088		
Total	<u><u>12,663,178</u></u>		
Requested Assessment	12,663,178	12,143,442	FY25 Actual
Amount above "affordable" (From GMRSD Stabilization)	-	<u>12,663,178</u>	
	-	519,736	Increase
Taxation share	<u>12,663,178</u>	4.28%	% incr

From "Surcharge for Infiltration and Inflow Payable by the Town of Montague"

updated 1/21/25 with CL info

I. I & I costs in Turners Falls, Montague City, and Montague Center

A Cost to remove grit contained in I & I
 25.31% I & I solids as percent of total solids (calculation below).
 22,299 Total cost to remove grit - estimated at FY23 total payments to Waste Management for grit removal
5,644 Est cost to remove grit due to I & I

B Increased electrical costs for increased pumping
 204,000 Budgeted Electricity
 0.08 Document's estimated % of electricity used for primary screw pump
 46.58% I & I as % of total flow (calculation below)
7,601 Electricity x % for pump x I & I %

C Increased amount of chlorine in primary clarifier and chlorine contact tank
 46.58% I & I as % of total flow (calculation below)
 17,250 Estimated FY24 Chlorine cost for primary clarifier and chlorine contact tank
 [FY23 total chlorine g=4,310, \$5.42/g) purchases = 13,257.6. Estimating 75% used for above purpose per info in document]
8,034 Cost of chlorine for primary clarifier and chlorine contact tank for I & I flow

D Increased labor due to grit handling, equipment maintenance, chlorine handling, and process control modifications
 Document says this is estimated at 1 FTE employee. FY26 Budget has 9 FTE, so 1 FTE = 1/9 total labor costs

547,874	5110 Regular Wages
46,000	5132 OT Wages
12,000	5172 Workers Comp
189,000	5174 Health Insurance
143,578	5191 Retirement
938,452	
104,272	1/9 total labor costs

II. Increased fee from Erving due to I & I from Millers Falls

40,759,301	Erving's flow from Millers Falls. CY 2024
(11,004,000)	Less the Millers Metered Q Cal24 of the TFWD metered Q to FF
29,755,301	total I & I from Millers Falls going to Erving
73.00%	as a %, rounded to 6 decimal places
\$136,229	PY MF Overage If SB decides to fund the amount over the FY26 budget for the known \$136,229.42,
248,192	Assessment to Montague from Erving for treating wastewater from MF, 2.5% increase/yr.
280,637	Cost of treating I & I from Millers Falls by Erving

TOTAL COST TO TOWN TO TREAT I & I IN FY25

406,188

Calculation of I & I as % of total Montague WPCF Flow	
321,732,046	2 calendar year average Montague CWF flow
(171,882,500)	Less Montague metered flow (MC = 7,310,000, LP = 3,445,175, TF+Mcity= 193,004,700)
149,849,546	Total I & I coming into Montague WPCF
46.58%	I & I as % of total flow

Calculation of I & I solids as % of total solids	
740,670	Montague WPCF influent solids in pounds/year. This is a 2 year average.
187,462	pounds of solids due to I & I. This uses the I & I flow calculated above, and 150 mg/l as the percentage of solids in the I & I
25.31%	I & I solids as percent of total solids. This % will be used in other calculations.

Total I & I Town Cost	\$406,188	as % of
Total 440	\$2,267,942	17.91%
Total 661	\$3,221,303	12.61%

Glossary of Finance/Budget Terms:

Available Funds – Non-operating revenues that include Free Cash, Stabilization Funds, Retained Earnings, and Receipts Reserved for Appropriation. This last one is unique to the Colle building. The fund contains the balance of lease revenue from tenants less expenditures for maintenance and debt service. These funds can only be used for the Colle building.

Debt Exclusion – A vote at a municipal election to exclude debt service payments for a particular capital project from the Proposition 2-1/2 levy limit. The annual debt service is added to the levy limit for the life of the debt only.

Excess Capacity – The difference between the actual levy and the levy limit (or maximum allowable levy if exclusions - such as debt exclusions - apply).

Enterprise Funds – Montague has such funds for sewer and airport services. These allow the town to show the portion of the cost of services that are covered by user fees and the portion subsidized by the Tax Levy. Enterprise Funds allow the town to reserve the “surplus” or Retained Earnings for the fund.

Estimated Local Receipts – Estimates of fees and income paid to the town other than payments to Enterprise Funds or Receipts Reserved for Appropriation, and specifically excluding the Tax Levy and State Aid. The largest of these is Motor Vehicle Excise Tax; others are Trash Stickers, reimbursements for School Resource Officers, and lease payments for solar arrays.

Free Cash – Funds remaining from the previous year’s operations that are certified by the Department of Revenue as available for appropriation. Free Cash includes revenues received in excess of estimates and unspent appropriations. (Retained Earnings is the equivalent of Free Cash for Enterprise Funds.)

Fund – An accounting entity segregated for specific purposes or activities. Examples are the General Fund, WPCF and Airport Enterprise Funds, the Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Fund and Stabilization Funds.

General Fund – This fund includes general town services, but excludes the school district assessments, Clean Water Facility (CWF), Airport and Colle building.

New Growth – The added taxing capacity from increases in real estate and personal property value that are not the result of revaluation or appreciation. This is added to the normal 2-1/2% increase in the prior year tax levy to get the new levy amount. The largest contributors to New Growth are new construction and new equipment.

Operating Budget – The proposed expenditures for personnel, services, supplies and other non-capital expenditures; this is spending that occurs annually. Money unspent at year end becomes part of the Free Cash calculation.

Overlay Surplus – The amount of overlay (reserve for abatement and exemptions for real estate and personal property taxes) deemed no longer required by the Board of Assessors and release for use by the Town as an available funding source. If not appropriated by the end of the fiscal year, it becomes part of the next year's Free Cash.

Revolving Fund – A self-contained fund allowed under MGL and approved by Town Meeting, that allows certain revenues to go directly to the fund and expenditures from the fund without appropriation up to the limit of the cash balance of the fund. An example is the Parks & Recreation Revolving Fund. Program fees go directly to this fund and are spent on programs without appropriation by Town Meeting.

Special Articles – We use this term (rather than just “Article”) as an internal means to differentiate between operating budget articles and proposed expenditures for non-recurring purposes, including a Discretionary Account for Public Works. The definition of allowable purposes is generally narrower than Operating Budgets, and unspent amounts at year end are carried forward to the next year. The DPW Discretionary Account was established to enable purchases and repairs that occur sporadically, are difficult to forecast in time, and are for larger amounts.

Stabilization Fund – An account from which amounts may be appropriated for any lawful purpose. Montague has several stabilization funds for different purposes. They include the Town General Stabilization Fund, Town Capital Stabilization Fund, FCTS Stabilization Fund, GMRSD Stabilization Fund and the CWF Capital Stabilization Fund. Funds are appropriated into each fund by town meeting vote, and appropriations from each fund must be approved by a 2/3 vote of town meeting. Funding generally comes from Taxation, Free Cash or Sewer User Fees or Retained Earnings. The FCTS Stabilization Fund is added to when the FCTS Assessment is lower than expected, and used when there are significant increases to that assessment.

State Aid – Revenue allocated to towns by the State. The largest portion is Unrestricted General Government Aid.

Taxation – The narrow definition is the Net Property Tax Levy, after deduction of some allowances and addition of debt-service of excluded debt. As a funding source for warrant articles, Taxation includes the Tax Levy, State Aid, and Estimated Receipts.