

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE, SELECTBOARD AND CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2019 AT 6:00 PM
MEETING MINUTES

Attendees by Committee

Finance Committee

- Richard Widmer
- Christopher Menegoni
- Frederic Bowman
- Greg Garrison
- Jennifer Audley, Chair
- John Hanold

Selectboard

- Michael Nelson, Vice Chair
- Richard Kuklewicz, Chair
- Christopher Boutwell

Capital Improvements Committee

- Josh Lively, Chair
- Gregory Garrison
- Steve Ellis
- Fred Bowman

All three meetings were called to order at 6:00 PM.

Finance Committee chair announced that the meeting was being recorded by MCTV and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. No one else was recording the meeting.

Discussion: First Light settlement and implications

Overview of settlement, implications, and timeline (Ms. Tonelli)

Director of Assessing Karen Tonelli updated the Selectboard, Finance Committee and CIC on the settlement with First Light and the town of Montague. No specific details of the settlement agreement were given. The Town has signed the settlement agreement and is waiting for First Light to execute the document.

Ms. Tonelli and Steve Ellis said the settlement was favorable to the town. The agreement includes FY2014 through the fiscal year 2020. Additionally, the agreement includes scheduled discussions for upcoming fiscal years to avoid future legal issues.

Once the signed document is received, the Board of Assessors will determine the amount of funds to transfer from Overlay to Overlay Surplus (also called Overlay Reserve) upon the request of the Selectboard. The Finance Committee will have the opportunity to discuss how to treat these additional funds.

Members of the Finance Committee and the Selectboard had a brief general discussion about how to treat the funds released from the overlay account. There was no agreement reached, nor a motion made.

Updates from the Capital Improvements Committee (Mr. Lively)

Josh Lively updated the Finance Committee and Selectboard on the status of ongoing capital improvement projects. Additionally, there was general discussion regarding progress on assessing status of town properties and creating a database of repairs/maintenance. This will be considered by the CIC and the FinCom and Selectboard will be kept informed.

At the Special Town Meeting on Oct 2, the CIC will recommend that Town Meeting consider approving roof repairs to the Unity Park Field House. The roof has failed and needs repair. Representative Blais has secured \$25,000 in state funding to assist in those repairs. Estimates have been received on the repairs but no bid has been awarded.

An update was provided on the Millers Falls sewer infiltration study. The engineering report will be released soon. The report should provide guidance on repairs required to remediate the critical areas of sewer infrastructure from water infiltration and an article concerning this may be on the Special Town Meeting warrant. The current infiltration levels are exceeding the volumes negotiated with the town of Erving to manage the waste from Millers Falls. Failure to correct the infiltration levels could result in additional sewer charges from the town of Erving.

Discussion: Should the Town Administrator continue to prepare a narrative report for FY21 along the lines of last year's "Budget Review and Revenue Projections for FY20"?

Members of the Finance Committee and Select Board provided feedback to Mr. Ellis on the narrative report for the budget. Mr. Ellis will consider the feedback and draft the current year report with their recommendations in mind.

Discussion: Finance Committee vision/values (blueprint) – (Mr. Widmer)

Mr. Widmer reviewed the observations and proposals he'd included in a letter to the committee on August 12. All of his considerations were considered and discussed. Mr. Garrison submitted a written response to Mr. Widmer. Finance Committee members did not take any action on Mr. Widmer's proposals, instead electing to remain focused on established policies and processes.

Mr. Widmer did suggest a motion addressing a public space provision as outlined in the letter but later withdrew it. No votes were taken.

Review: Finance Committee procedures and expectations, 2nd draft (Ms. Audley)

Ms. Audley tabled this for discussion at a future meeting.

Town Accountant's Report (Ms. Olsen)

Ms. Olsen provided an update on FY19 closing. All went well except that there were an unusual number of FY19 bills that were not received in time to be paid and which will be on the October 2nd special town meeting warrant. Ms. Olsen provided handouts of things to consider regarding potential uses of reserves and prior minutes discussing taxing to the levy limit. Ms. Olsen also distributed information about the sources and total amount of free cash certified after the close of FY19.

There was no discussion of how the certified free cash might be allocated; this topic will be addressed at our meeting on September 11, 2019 in conjunction with a review of the warrant for the Oct 2 Special Town Meeting.

Agenda requests, minute-takers for upcoming meetings, unanticipated news received within 48 hours

There were no agenda requests.

Ms. Audley will email a proposal for meeting dates through the end of 2019, and requests that members respond with their availability and an indication of dates when they could take the minutes.

Mr. Garrison will send a draft of this meeting's minutes to Ms. Olsen, who will receive and reconcile suggestions for amendments.

Mr. Ellis announced that he intended to post a call on the Town's website for applications from Montague residents interested in serving on a new Regional School District Planning Committee, which will include representation from Gill, Montague, Northfield, Bernardston, Leyden, and Warwick.

Ms. Audley announced that the GMRSD superintendent had proposed Sept 17 as a date for a meeting of the Civic Leaders group. She asked Finance

Committee members who planned to attend to inform her in advance and offered to ensure that the meeting was posted as a Finance Committee meeting if necessary.

All meetings were adjourned by 8:00PM