

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Final Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/681131270>

PRESENT: Gregory Garrison, Vice-Chair; John Hanold, Chris Menegoni, Fred Bowman and Jennifer Waryas, members; BettyLou Mallet, Scribe.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Airport Manager Brian Camden; WPCF Superintendent/Pretreatment Coordinator Chelsey Little; DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron.

ABSENT: Jen Audley and Francia Wisnewski

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER -

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice- Chair, Gregory Garrison. The meeting is being recorded as well as aired on MCTV. Roll call for members attending and quorum obtained.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT – No public in attendance and no comments received.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2022 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Finance Committee members received the draft minutes of the February 16, 2022 meeting for their review. No comments. **On a motion by John Hanold and seconded by Fred Bowman, the minutes were approved as written. FB, aye; JH abstained due to being unable to thoroughly attend; JW, aye; CM, aye; GG, aye.**

4. REVIEW FINANCE COMMITTEE SUBMISSION FOR 2021 TOWN ANNUAL REPORT

The Finance Committee members received and reviewed the submission for the 2021 Town Annual Report. No changes made and all members approved the report as written.

5. FY23 BUDGET INVESTIGATION

Topics for tonight's meeting were consideration of the operating budget requests for the two enterprise funds: Airport and Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF).

Airport – Airport Manager Bryan Camden attended the discussion. GG reviewed his thoughts on the Airport's submission for the Special Town Meeting (STM). He felt that the budget narrative was thorough and that there were some unknowns in the expense portion as there had not been a full year since the purchase of Pioneer Aviation. GG spoke of the request to increase the part-time employee from 19 to 30 hours which would include benefits. There was a question regarding the revenue and Bryan stated he would break the categories of revenue down and submit to Carolyn. Bryan described how the airport manager position has grown and said adding 10 hours a week to the Operations Manager position will allow him to maintain other duties that have not received his full attention. A 40-hour/week position is

not fiscally feasible for FY23. This part-time position will be 5-6 hours daily including Saturday due to heavy air traffic. Bryan stated the new fuel pump as well as the computer components are on back order. His hope is for the fuel pump to be up and running late Spring/early Summer. There are some maintenance updates to be completed in a few of the buildings. Bryan's priority is the maintenance building. He also stated that there is outside interest in additional plane space at the Turners Falls Airport with new aircraft coming in from other towns. His hope is to secure land leases for future hangars being built after the increase in the cost of steel comes down.

JH asks Bryan about the loan from the town and his plan to repay in the future. Bryan is thinking positively and feels the repayment of the loan is doable. The revenue is increasing due to the new rentals as well as the new tenants so therefore, if there are no unforeseen expenses, the money will be returned on time.

JH also asked about the part-time position increasing to 30 hours and the cost of that position which includes benefits. Bryan stated due to the facility growing, staffing should be 1.75 to 2.5 positions and the increase will place staffing in line with duties of the facility.

GG discussed the capital needs of the operation going forward and feels the town will be seeing some retained earnings to help with future capital improvements. Bryan believes the accounts will stay in the black and any unforeseen problems can be handled through retained earnings.

There were no other questions or comments.

Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) – WPCF Superintendent Chelsey Little joined the meeting to discuss her requests for the ATM. GG stated there were no items for the STM and that the largest items for the WPCF were the screw pumps and the new back-up generator. He stated that the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) had a conversation with Chelsey regarding the corroded screw pumps and how stainless steel was a better option due to the lifetime of the pumps overall.

Although the current generator has been kept in immaculate condition, it does suffer from breakdowns and replacement parts are no longer available; therefore, a new back-up generator has been requested. The generator is currently inside the facility, however the new one will be placed outside, which will also provide more space inside the facility.

The request for a lab tech has been submitted as a staff position. Given the EPA and DEP regulations and reporting requirements, this is a very specialized position. This individual will have a background in science as well as an operator's license. If this position is approved at the ATM, Chelsey will work with the Union, create a job description, and go through the proper procedures to fill the position.

JW stated in reviewing previous budgets, she recalls seeing a line item for another Superintendent position at the WPCF but does not see it in the FY23 budget. CO stated that was Bob's position and he does not appear in the FY23 budget. Chelsey concurred stating Bob's position as consulting superintendent ends as of March 30th.

GG discussed another portion of Chelsey's budget narrative which was the increase in sludge hauling costs. Chelsey will be having a public discussion in a few weeks to reveal the outcome of a compost feasibility study. The state has been talking about funding regional composting facilities, and Chelsey hopes Montague will be one of these.

JW wanted to close the loop on the personnel discussion of the WPCF and asked where in the budget line items does the consulting superintendent fall for the previous year. CO stated the position is included in regular wages. Chelsey stated the position was Chief Operating Officer and re-titled to Foreman and that position has not been filled for 1 ½ years. Chelsey stated the costs have been offset by having the consulting superintendent and this position has been continued as there has been a backlog on work in industrial and he has been assisting in catching up.

DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron joined the meeting and described how the department is working in concert with the WPCF using the robotic camera, Vactor truck and personnel as it is important to take care of the Combined Sewer Overflow System (CSO) to see where the problem spots are and to have them repaired.

JH asked about the sewer rates increasing and if, in time, does Chelsey feel the rates will level off. She stated she has been focusing on grants in the last year or more, which if received, will relieve the burden on the tax payers. She feels there will always be a slight increase in the sewer rates, but she will try to control it.

JW asked about the increase in the special article request to \$900,000 and Chelsey stated that was updated today due to the stainless steel and the bypass pumping. JW understood from the conversation prior regarding stainless steel verses carbon steel and how one other town had been consulted and described stainless as being better although more in cost. Chelsey stated not only from consulting another town but from past practice knows that stainless steel is better due to hydrogen sulfites which change in to sulfuric acid when mixed with water so degrades any type of metal except for stainless steel. JW also asked about the timeline and Chelsey stated it would be immediate as the lifespan has passed.

There were no more questions regarding the WPCF.

6. PREPARATION FOR MARCH 3, 2022 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

GG reviewed the articles brought forth before the FinCom for the upcoming STM. He felt there were a few items that were relevant for the Finance Committee members to speak about such as the Vactor truck, the flooring at Hillcrest, the repairs on Montague City Road and the security at Unity Park. Carolyn Olsen stated each article should have a Finance Committee member assigned should there be any questions from the public. Therefore, Carolyn will review each article and assign a Finance Committee member to speak on its behalf should there be any public comment. She will send the list of Article/FinCom members via email. Gregory Garrison, Francia Wisnewski and Chris Menegoni are unable to attend the March 3, 2022 Special Town Meeting. All other members will be assigned special articles.

7. TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN THE 48 HOUR POSTING

There were no other topics to discuss.

8. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by FB and seconded by JH, the Finance Committee meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m. FB, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; GG, aye.

Respectfully submitted,
BettyLou Mallet
Scribe

Finance Committee Vote: 03/16/2022