

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Final Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/689164323>

PRESENT: Chair Jen Audley; Vice-Chair Gregory Garrison; John Hanold, Chris Menegoni, Jennifer Waryas and Francia Wisnewski, members; BettyLou Mallet, Scribe.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Town Administrator, Steve Ellis; Chris Boutwell and Matt Lord, Montague Selectboard members; Ariel Elan, Liaison to CIC and public; Chelsey Little, WPCF Superintendent; Tricia Perham, Library Trustees Chair.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jen Audley at 6:00 p.m. The meeting is being held via Zoom, is being aired on MCTV as well as recorded by Carolyn Olsen. All members present.

The Montague Selectboard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Chris Boutwell. Matt Lord and Chris Boutwell were present.

2. REVIEW OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON REQUESTS FOR THE 2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Greg Garrison, Chair of the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) took over the meeting to discuss the recommendations on the 2023 budget submissions report that was submitted to the Finance Committee for their review. He stated that from November 2021 to March 2022, the CIC reviewed all of the capital requests submitted by the town departments. The Committee vetted through the submissions and the final slate of requests are documented in this report with the CIC's recommendations.

WPCF Facility Screw Pumps

In the report, the request for the screw pumps is \$730,000 for carbon steel. Greg described the screw pumps and their vital function at the facility. He stated these screw pumps have been very well maintained and have outlived their 20 year lifespan. Should the screw pumps fail, remote pumping would be used so therefore, they would need to be replaced in a timely manner. Delivery time is 50 weeks to a year. Chelsey Little gave an updated request to the Committee this evening. The final request is \$745,000 which consists of \$700,000 for the carbon steel screw pumps, \$28,000 for the controls and \$16,480 for 12 weeks of bypass pumping. Greg explained that this is a patented system and probably the company that holds the patent will be the only company who will bid; there is a very small market for screw pumps.

JW asked the age of the current screw pumps. Chelsey stated they are 21 years old. Steve mentioned if the Selectboard decides to fund the screw pumps using ARPA funds, it would need to go through the procurement process and feels the best price would be going through the company who holds the patent. FW asked about the maintenance of the screw pumps and suggested possibly budgeting for maintenance in the future to reduce the price. Chelsey stated the mechanic at the facility has done a great job at maintaining these screw pumps and it is the wastewater environment that has caused the

corrosion. Matt Lord stated the Selectboard will be discussing the ARPA funds on March 28 and therefore, the screw pumps may not be placed on the town meeting warrant but paid for through ARPA funds. If ARPA funds are not chosen, funding would probably be from WPCF Capital Stabilization.

WPCF Back-Up Generator (450kW)

GG described the current generator at the WPCF, which was purchased in 1981 and for which replacement parts are no longer available. The new generator has a 30-year estimated life and will be placed outside the building, which will provide ideally more space inside the building for offices and conference rooms. The CIC recommended the replacement generator unanimously. There were no questions from the Finance Committee. The submitted request is for \$130,000 and the funding source would be the WPCF Capital Stabilization Fund.

Carnegie Library Basement Renovation

GG described the basement of the Carnegie Library as an unhealthy work environment with repeated and chronic moisture-related issues. The Library Trustees would like to remediate this by having a substantial portion of the basement renovated in conjunction with the outside regrading of the driveway performed by the DPW. Phase I of this project relocated the Library Director and other staff to the second floor of the library and included the installation of a new sub panel. Phase II will be the demolition of the walls and ceilings of the basement and install new walls, fixtures, window wells and 2 new mini-splits to remediate the moisture and improve air filtration. Once complete, the temporary offices on the second floor will be moved back to the new basement office area. The town has recently received a quote from Jamrog. The breakdown of this project will be \$100,000 for demolition and construction work, \$20,000 for 2 mini-split HVACs and \$10,000 set aside for project contingency totaling \$130,000. Tricia Perham stated she met with the CIC to work over the details of this project and what had been described is very “workable”.

JH asked if there are any known projects for the future for the Carnegie Library? Tricia stated the goal is to have a safe work environment and a private office space for the Library Director. She felt that when this project is complete, the library should be okay for 5-10 years. At that point, the goal would be to make the building fully accessible. She is not anticipating any other repairs however the roof drains should be investigated and that will most likely tie in to a roof repair project. Steve mentioned the roof consultants found during their comprehensive assessment that the roof drains were improperly installed and he should receive a complete report within the next few weeks.

JA supports this project as the Carnegie is a historic building owned by the town and she would like to have it restored for full use.

The submitted request is for \$130,000 and the funding source would be Free Cash.

Montague Center Library Masonry Repair

GG described the current condition of the brick and grout of the Montague Center Library where a building assessment in 2020/2021 revealed water leaks and moisture issues along with chipped bricks and degrading mortar. Tricia explained a more recent engineering study described the need for mortar repair and necessary drainage improvements to reduce the moisture in the basement. The DPW has addressed the moisture issue by regrading the area which improved the water drainage. The building is in

need of foundation work on the North Street side, window replacements, insulation in the attic and mini-splits to rid moisture along with the brick and mortar repair.

JA praised the volunteer work of the library trustees who play a very important role in maintaining the three libraries in Montague. She feels it is the responsibility of the town to care for these buildings. JW questioned the date of the property assessment and Tricia stated that although the library trustees had a setback due to Linda Hickman's resignation and the pandemic, they will be creating a framework with up-to-date costs and priorities in the spring. The submitted request is \$100,000 with the funding source as the Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

DPW Discretionary Fund

The CIC reviews the DPW discretionary fund every year. It provides immediate access to funds for large, urgent purchases and/or repairs. The goal of the DPW is to begin each year with a balance of \$100,000. At this time, the balance of the funds is \$70,000 and Superintendent Bergeron has notified the CIC of his plan to replace an aging zero-turn mower for \$30,000. Although the recommendation is for \$50,000, bringing the balance to \$120,000, this purchase would reduce the balance to \$90,000.

FW asked if any other departments have the flexibility of spending through discretionary funds. GG felt the only other department that would have the scope of expensive repairs or replace costly equipment would be the Police Department which already has a discretionary fund. JA said the Police Department had withdrawn its request to add to their discretionary fund this year, and has almost spent it down. JH agrees with GG as the Highway Department has equipment that can incur expensive repairs and that the discretionary fund is watched closely by the CIC and the Accountant.

Matt Lord stated the Selectboard discussed the DPW's discretionary fund and agrees with the CIC's recommendation. He also stated the big ticket items can happen at irregular times and cannot be anticipated. JW asks for continued transparency and documentation for all items purchased through the discretionary fund. JA stated the discretionary fund spending has been more visible as the CIC reviews the initial request and monitors the budget closely.

The FinCom is comfortable recommending the \$50,000 with the funding source from taxation.

Town Hall Main Roof Replacement

Although the Montague Town Hall's roof does not yet leak, the asphalt shingles are shredding and falling off. A study produced by Northeast Roof Consultants in January 2022 reported the roof is in imminent need of being replaced. The estimate includes the removal of an antenna, decking and current shingles plus the cost of the 30-year architectural asphalt shingles, new decking and resheathing. The cost is \$125,000 and the funding source would be Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

Shea Theater Lower Roof Replacement

GG explained this request is for the lower mezzanine roof which is actively leaking. The cost includes the removal of a large HVAC unit and duct work with the use of a crane in order to complete the work. The main roof of the Shea was replaced in 2018. The new roof has a 30-year lifespan. After this project is complete, the Shea should be in good condition for years to come. The cost is \$60,000 and the funding source would be Free Cash.

Health Department Vehicle

The Board of Health requested a vehicle to conduct inspections and other BOH work. It is a reasonable request as town owned, rather than personal vehicles should be used for town business. The CIC would like to investigate this request to further include departments such as the Building Department and Assessors Office and will revisit at a future date. JA as well as Matt Lord agrees to bring this request back at a future date when additional information is provided and to not place this current request on the town meeting warrant.

3. DISCUSSION OF FY23 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

The Finance Committee received budget refinement information from Accountant Carolyn Olsen and Town Administrator Steve Ellis.

CO stated she has only received a response from the Police Department regarding the fuel oil and gasoline expense line. The deadline for all town meeting articles is tomorrow and she hopes to send out the final budget by mid-day on Monday. Although he suggested at the last meeting to make an increased adjustment for fuel oil/gasoline in all departments due to the rising costs, JH now understands some departments have contractual agreements that includes fuel pricing but is still reluctant to keep the line items the same in other departments.

Steve stated that he and CO can look through the FY23 budget again. Matt Lord agrees to increase fuel line item for the Police Department per the Chief's request and continue with the initial documentation for other departments.

4. OPEN SEATS ON THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The FinCom deferred this discussion to a future meeting.

The Selectboard members adjourned at 7:42 p.m. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye. Adjourned.

5. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 23, 2022 AND MARCH 9, 2022

The Finance Committee members received the draft minutes of February 23, 2022 for their review. There were no comments. **On a motion by JH and seconded by GG, the minutes of February 23, 2022 were approved as written. No discussion. CM, aye; FW, aye; JW, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JA abstained. (5 aye, 0 nay, 1 abstention)**

The Finance Committee members received the draft minutes of March 9, 2022 for their review. CM requested his comment regarding the police cruiser be amended. **On a motion by JH and seconded by FW, the minutes of March 9, 2022 were approved as amended. CM, aye; FW, aye; JW, aye; JH, aye; GG, aye; JA, aye. (6 aye, 0 nay, 0 abstention).**

6. TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED

JA asked Matt Lord to come back to a Finance Committee meeting to give a presentation on his research and recommendations regarding the cannabis impact funds.

FW would like to receive an update on the ARPA funds and have a future discussion with the Finance Committee's recommendations.

JA found an ad for Finance Committee members. She will send to the members for their review prior to future discussion regarding openings for FY23.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES:

March 23, 2022 – FY23 budget reconciliation and balancing – The Finance Committee will walk through the budget and discuss their findings.

March 30, 2022 – Planning for FinCom Report on FY23 Budget – If the motions for the Annual Town Meeting are ready, the FinCom is asked to be prepared to give recommendations.

April 6, 2022 – Final votes on ATM articles – Final recommendations as well as the Finance Committee's Annual Report.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by JH and seconded by GG, the Finance Committee meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m. CM, aye; GG, aye; JW, aye; FW, aye; JH, aye; JA, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

BettyLou Mallet
Scribe

Approved by Montague Finance Committee: 03/23/2022

Materials:

Capital Improvements Committee Recommendations of 2022 Budget Submissions: https://montague-ma.gov/files/CIC_2022_Annual_Report_-_One_Year_Capital_Plan_03-11-22.pdf