

## MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Draft Minutes

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/749937220>

**PRESENT:** Chair Francia Wisnewski, Vice-Chair Greg Garrison, Clerk Dorinda Bell-Upp and Chris Menegoni, member; Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Town Administrator Steve Ellis; Tom Bergeron, Highway Superintendent; Ariel Elan, CIC member; Scribe BettyLou Mallet.

**ABSENT:** John Hanold and Jennifer Waryas

#### 1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chair Francia Wisnewski. The meeting is being recorded by CO and aired on MCTV. FW reviewed the agenda with the members and viewing audience.

#### 2. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 24, 2022

The members received the draft minutes of August 24, 2022. There were no questions or comments. FW requested the title Clerk to be added to those present for Dorinda Bell-Upp. **On a motion by GG and second by DB-U, the members voted to accept the minutes of August 24, 2022 with the requested revision. GG, aye; CM, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. Minutes approved.**

The members revised the agenda to accommodate Tom Bergeron, Highway Superintendent, allowing him to speak with the members regarding the following agenda item.

#### 3. UPDATE ON DPW DISCRETIONARY ACCOUNT

Mr. Bergeron described his meeting with the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) about the discretionary fund and ways to make the process a simpler one. GG added that what Mr. Bergeron would like to do is to roll over the article balance from year to year and appropriate a full \$100,000, or other amount, annually rather than only appropriating enough to make the balance forward plus the new appropriation equal \$100,000. If the highway department needs to purchase a small vehicle with affordable pricing, the funds would be available without having to bring before a special town meeting. FW would like to continue this discussion at the next meeting where more members will be present. GG also mentioned the thought of placing a cap on the size of the account as well as the size of an individual purchase. Any items beyond the cap would be brought to town meeting as a separate special article. Mr. Bergeron stated this discretionary fund has been in place for 18 years. He stated his mechanics are utilizing computers more and therefore this fund allows the purchase of computers and software which help maintain and repair vehicles and saves on the costs of using outside mechanics. CM feels it is an ideal use of the funds as costs of vehicles are rising but thinks larger expenses require town meeting approval.

#### 4. FINALIZE RECOMMENDED FINANCIAL POLICIES – A-1 (Annual Budget Process)

FW summed up the discussion of the last meeting where this policy had been discussed, revisions made and a final draft was to be forwarded on to all the stakeholders for their review. GG stated the CIC had not had the chance to review and will be placed on the next meeting agenda. This item will be placed on the next Finance Committee meeting agenda for further discussion.

## **5. UPDATES FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND TOWN ACCOUNTANT**

Steve Ellis announced that Walter Ramsey will be the Assistant Town Administrator effective October 3, 2022 and offered a 3-year contract. A committee will be created for the Town Planner position and in the meantime, Walter will assume both roles. Steve also mentioned there were hang-ups regarding the union contracts so those special articles are not finalized. The warrant for the Special Town Meeting needs to be set by September 26, 2022 and he hopes to have the figures by next week. He also added information about the important update regarding the cannabis host community agreement and how the laws have changed substantially. The Selectboard has placed a moratorium on spending any additional cannabis funds at this time.

Town Accountant – CO did not have any information to add to tonight’s meeting.

## **6. VOTE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIAL ARTICLES**

The members received a draft of the Special Town Meeting warrant for October 13, 2022, outlining 16 articles for discussion. Steve Ellis placed the draft warrant on the screen for members and viewers to follow along as he discussed each article. After reviewing the articles, Steve mentioned one other article to be added. The new article will appropriate funds to complete the capping of the burn dump to comply with the DEP’s Corrective Action Design Plan for the proper capping. GG stated the CIC reviewed the contract for engineering services for proper design and construction supervision and recommends this special article for approval.

FW would also like to continue this discussion at the next Finance Committee meeting so that other members will have the ability to add to the discussion.

## **7. UPDATE ON MASTER PLAN PARTICIPATION**

Steve gave highlights of this committee and its development. Overall, there has been a good job reaching audiences through a survey with over 500 responses received as of today. An \$80,000 grant from the Municipal Vulnerabilities Program has been received which will allow completion of the project without direct costs. The next public meeting for the Master Plan will be on September 29 at 5:30 p.m. Information about the process is found on the town’s website under the banner “5 Villages, 1 Future”.

## **8. FUTURE MEETING TOPICS**

The committee did not have any future topics to add for discussion. The next meeting date will be Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

## **9. TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS OF POSTING- None**

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion by GG and second by CM, the committee moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m. GG, aye; CM, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,  
BettyLou Mallet  
Scribe

Meeting materials – Agenda 09/14/2022, Draft Minutes 08/24/2022, A-1 Annual Budget Process 8.24.22, Special Town Meeting draft warrant 10-13-2022.