

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes

Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/752574808>

PRESENT: Chair Francia Wisnewski, Vice-Chair Greg Garrison, Clerk Dorinda Bell-Upp, Chris Menegoni and Jennifer Waryas, members; Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Town Administrator Steve Ellis and Scribe BettyLou Mallet.

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 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 SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

The members received the draft minutes of September 14, 2022. There were no questions or comments.

On a motion by JH and second by JW, the members voted to accept the minutes of September 14, 2022 as written. DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; CM, aye; JW, aye; FW, aye. Minutes approved.

3. UPDATES FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND TOWN ACCOUNTANT

a. Town Administrator – Steve told the committee that the union negotiations with UE and NAGE were finalized this afternoon; therefore, it will be discussed at the Special Town Meeting. He also noted that the Selectboard appointed a new hiring committee for the Town Planner position. He received word that the Health Director is leaving. He met with the Board of Health to define the hiring process. The Selectboard along with Steve Ellis, will deviate from past practices and create a broader hiring committee.

Steve also mentioned that the low bidder for the town hall roof withdrew the bid. Therefore the work will begin with the next lowest bidder. Bids for the next phase of the Avenue A Streetscapes Project have been received. This phase begins at the Shea Theatre to Between The Uprights. Information regarding the Streetscapes design can be found at the town hall or can receive a digital version from Walter Ramsey. JW asked for more information regarding the bidding process for projects and SE gave detailed information starting with receiving the bids and unforeseen conditions which require change orders.

b. Town Accountant – CO stated Free Cash has been certified. She will detail the entire process at a later meeting.

4. DISCUSS AND VOTE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIAL ARTICLES

The motions for the Special Town Meeting was placed on the screen for all of the members and viewing audience to review.

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$37,940 for the purpose of funding the implementation of a collective bargaining agreement with the New England Police Benevolent Association for Fiscal Year 2023, with increases to be paid retroactively to July 1, 2022, said sum to be raised from Taxation. **This motion was moved by JH and second by GG. No discussion DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to amend the Classification Plan to add the position of DPW Lead Operator at Grade E. CO stated this article allows an employee to be in the lead position from Grade D to an E. **Moved by GG and second by JH. No discussion. DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$19,732 for the purpose of funding the implementation of a collective bargaining agreement with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 274 for Fiscal Year 2023, with increases to be paid retroactively to July 1, 2022, with \$17,831 to be raised from Taxation and \$1,901 to be raised from Sewer User Fees. **Moved by JH and second by GG. DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$34,834 for the purpose of funding the implementation of a collective bargaining agreement with the National Association of Government Employees for Fiscal Year 2023, with increases to be paid retroactively to July 1, 2022, with \$34,142 to be raised from Taxation and \$692 to be raised from Sewer User Fees. **Moved by JH and second by GG.** Discussion – CO stated this is mostly the 3% COLA and a slight shift differential. SE also noted that Juneteenth was been added as a holiday. Also, first year employees will no longer be granted a 1 weeks of vacation but increased to 2 weeks. **DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to amend the vote taken pursuant to Article 7 of the May 7, 2022 Annual Town Meeting by increasing the annual salary of the Treasurer/Tax Collector to \$75,009 and increasing the annual salary of the Town Clerk to \$78,423. **Moved by JH and second by GG.** The only addition to this article is the 3% COLA to the salary. FW asked about gender equity and pay scale. SE stated all of the positions and scales start and end points are for all employees according to skill and experience. **DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to amend the vote taken pursuant to Article 8 of the May 7, 2022 Annual Town Meeting by changing the wage ranges for the following Non-Union employees as shown. **Moved by JH and second by GG.** No discussion. **DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$22,318 for the purpose of funding a Wage Adjustment for the pay schedule for elected officials shown on Schedule I for Fiscal Year 2023 as set forth under Article 5 of this warrant and non-union employees shown on Schedule II for Fiscal Year 2023 as set forth under Article 6 of this Warrant, with increases to be paid retroactively to July 1, 2022, with \$19,636 to be raised from Taxation and \$2,682 to be raised from Sewer User Fees. **JH moved and sec-**

and by GG. JW asked about the source coming from sewer user fees. CO stated it is the salary of the Superintendent who is non-union. No other discussion. **CM, aye; JW, aye; JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$12,500 for the purpose of purchasing and installing cable related equipment for MCTV and anything incidental or related thereto said sum to be raised from PEG Access Funds. **JH moved and second by GG.** JW inquires of this is done every year. CO stated once the money is received from Comcast, it is appropriated. **CM, aye; JW, aye; JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,684 for the purpose of paying prior year bills of the Clean Water Facility operating budget, said sum to be raised from Sewer User Fees. **Moved by JH and second by GG.** CO explained about the lingering bills from last year. **DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$4,432 for the purpose of increasing the Sealer of Weights FY2023 budget, said sum to be raised from Taxation. **JH moved and second by GG.** SE stated the State has changed the cost of the service for the Sealer of Weights which was discussed at the last meeting. This is an annual bill. **DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to establish a special purpose Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund in accordance with MGL Chapter 40 Section 5B and dedicate 100% of the opioid settlement revenues to the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund, effective for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2023. **GG moved and second by JH.** CO will be attaching the background information regarding the opioid settlement to the article as more of a description. **CM, aye; JW, aye; JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$22,000 for the purpose of designing and constructing the replacement of the Colle Building roof and any related improvements, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation. **GG made the motion and second by JH.** SE stated this is the first time the Colle roof has been done and will be done simultaneously with the Shea. **DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to amend Section 6 of Article II of the Town of Montague General Bylaws, relating to the Capital Improvements Committee, with the deletions as shown in strikeout and additions shown **bold** below.

Section 6: Capital Improvements Committee: There shall be a Capital Improvements Committee consisting of ~~one member appointed by and from the Planning Board, and four additional~~ **five** members to be appointed by the Moderator **for a term of one year each**, with powers and duties to include (a) to conduct an annual review of the capital improvements program of the Town as well as proposals for the construction of municipal buildings and acquisition of property, (b) to make recommendations to the Town Meeting regarding the above, and (c) to prepare an annual report. **The terms of the existing members of the Capital Improvements Committee shall terminate on June 30, 2023 and the Moderator shall appoint five individuals to fill those positions for one year terms beginning on July 1, 2023.**

Moved by JH and second by GG. GG stated that all members are now appointed by the Moderator. **CM, aye; JW, aye; JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$60,000 for the purpose of designing and constructing improvements to floors in the Hillcrest Elementary School and any related improvements, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from the GMRSD Stabilization Fund. **GG moved and second by JH.** FW stated there was a comprehensive discussion regarding this article at last week's meeting Joanne Blier is available for additional information. **CM, aye; JW, aye; JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$22,100 for the purpose of increasing the FY2023 budgets for the following departments to accommodate expected increases in electricity costs, said sum to be raised from Taxation. **GG moved and second by JH.** FW stated there was a comprehensive discussion at the last meeting with SE. **DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to reduce the FY2023 MEDIC Budget by \$3,077. **GG made the motion and second by JH.** CO informed the members that the MEDIC coordinator duties are now part of the Assistant Town Administrator's job description so no additional stipend is needed. **CM, aye; JW, aye; JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

Moved: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$12,000 for the purpose of funding professional engineering services associated with the closure of the Burn Dump Landfill on Sandy Lane and anything incidental or related thereto, said sum to be funded from Taxation. **GG moved and second by JH.** SE stated the Burn Dump Landfill has been closed and supplemental information will be given at the STM. **CM, aye; JW, aye; JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; FW, aye. This article is approved by the Finance Committee.**

5. CONSIDER LIMITS ON DPW DISCRETIONARY ACCOUNT TOTAL BALANCE AND INDIVIDUAL PURCHASES.

FW recapped last week's discussion regarding the Discretionary Account for the members who were not in attendance. JH stated the fund goes way back and allowed flexibility to spend funds from year to year due to the costs and commitment needed in a short period of time. CO stated Tom Bergeron would like to change the procedure to receive the \$100,000 each year along with what funds are left from the previous year. There should also be a cap placed on the amount he is able to spend as well as the size of the vehicles. GG stated this discretionary fund has worked through past practices however due to the increase in cost of vehicles, the CIC is considering a change in the distribution of funds as well as placing a cap on spending. CM feels if the \$100,000 is maintained year, it is fine. He does feel however, that a new line in the budget for large equipment along with other departments such as the Police Department, would allow more flexibility.

GG states this is an ongoing discussion. Mr. Bergeron's needs have been recognized and the CIC will be continuing the discussion. The Finance Committee is in support of the \$100,000 to be carried forward and further adjustments to be made such as a cap on large purchases and will bring forth a more definitive agreement once the CIC has refined its decision.

6. FUTURE MEETING TOPICS – The next meeting will be after the Special Town Meeting. It will be held on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. The Committee will continue discussion on the financial policy A-1 (Annual Budget Process).

7. TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS OF THE POSTING – None

8. ADJOURNMENT - On a motion by GG and second by JW, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m. **DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,
BettyLou Mallet
Scribe

Meeting materials - Agenda 09/21/2022, Draft Minutes 09/14/2022, Special Town Meeting draft warrant 10-13-2022, Actual and Budgeted Expenses and Encumbrances 9/20/2022.

DRAFT