

## **MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Final Minutes**

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.**

**This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/762319157>**

**PRESENT:** Chair Francia Wisnewski, Vice-Chair Greg Garrison, Clerk Dorinda Bell-Upp, Chris Menegoni, John Hanold, Jennifer Waryas and Fred Bowman, members; Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Ariel Elan, resident 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. Members welcomed back Fred Bowman.

#### **2. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES – September 21, 2022**

All members received the draft minutes of the September 21, 2022 meeting. There were no questions or revisions. **On a motion by GG and second by JH, the minutes of September 21, 2022 were approved as written. JH, aye; DB-U, aye; JW, aye; GG, aye; FB, aye; CM, aye; FW, aye.**

#### **3. SCRIBE POSITION**

FW opened the discussion regarding the scribe position. BettyLou Mallet joined the discussion saying she asked the Chair to place this on the agenda. She likes to check in with the committee every so often. She stated when she was approached and discussed the position with the previous Chair, she stated she would help until another scribe was found. Members asked questions regarding the complexity of the job as well as compensation. BettyLou stated it took some time to become familiar with the members and the terms used. She also stated the position is convenient when able to watch online, take notes and create the minutes. Steve Ellis offered to place information on the town website which also links to Facebook. JW will also assist in advertising for the position and will work with FW.

#### **4. FOLLOW-UP ON STM VOTES, IF NEEDED**

FW opened the opportunity for members to discuss the outcome of the Special Town Meeting votes. DB-U stated it was a 1 ½ hour meeting, she felt the questions were standard for new town meeting members as well as lengthy discussions about the Sealer of Weights and Hillcrest School. JH felt the largest discussion was regarding the contract settlement issues. His suggestion is for the committee members to keep answers closer to the warrant article descriptions in order to hold the meeting in a reasonable amount of time. FW felt the meeting flowed at a good pace. She'd like to discuss how to support the town meeting members and give them the basic information in their packets which may help alleviate some of the questions brought up at town meeting. SE felt the meeting consisted of respectful conversation and that it is gratifying to have a quorum; however, he suggests examining the attendance patterns for town meeting.

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

##### **a. 5 YEAR BUDGET FORECAST**

CO spoke about the grant to create a budget forecast which was completed about a year ago. She explained that due to the fact that the formatting is different from the way she presents budgets, she created her version which she labeled as “informal” and gave the comparison between the “formal” and “in-

formal” forecasts. She opened the conversation to members with questions. She explained that the margin of error between the “formal” and “informal” versions was minimal. Members would like to have more time to review the documents and perhaps bring this topic back for future conversation.

**b. SCHOOL REGIONALIZATION (STRPB) FOCUS GROUP MEETING**

SE spoke about the focus group which is to start on Monday November 14. The FinCom is welcome to jointly post the meeting and join for the first hour. This discussion is regarding the effort supported by the State to regionalize Gill-Montague and Pioneer. SE also mentioned that Gill would like to have a separate meeting with the Finance Committee which would be on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. This will be an in-person or hybrid meeting.

**c. FREE CASH AND RETAINING EARNINGS**

CO shared her screen for the committee and audience to review. She described the General Fund Balance sheet which shows the Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balance. She described to the members how free cash is calculated. She also showed the end-of-year undesignated fund balance calculation and line items of what has been “backed-out” to determine free cash. CO also reviewed the FY22 revenues, showing the budget, the actual and variance between the budget and actual amounts by category. The larger variances were explained. JW questioned the amount of penalties and interest paid and CO stated that statutes require a 14% interest rate on outstanding tax bills.

**6. FINALIZE RECOMMENDED FINANCIAL POLICIES; A1 (ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS)**

The committee received policy A-1 (Annual Budget Process) which was reviewed and revised by the CIC (Capital Improvement Committee). GG described the various changes the CIC made throughout the policy. There was no discussion. **On a motion by JH and second by JW, policy A-1 Annual Budget Process was approved by the Finance Committee as revised by the CIC. JH, aye; DB-U, aye; JW, aye; CM, aye; GG, aye; FW, aye. (FB was offline and unable to vote).**

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

FW reviewed the past conversations regarding the discretionary account with the Finance Committee. The DPW Superintendent is advocating to receive \$100,000 each year in a discretionary account as well as requesting the ability to carry over leftover funds from the previous year in the same fund. Large purchases will be brought before town meeting. GG stated the CIC will be working on language regarding a cap being placed for such purchases. The CIC will continue discussions at their November 7, 2022 meeting.

**8. FUTURE MEETING TOPICS - none**

**9. TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS OF POSTING**

FW mentioned a presentation she viewed by the Department of Revenue (Division of Local Services) regarding cherry sheets (link below). If any other members wish to view, please let her know. She also stated she toured the Clean Water Facility and encourages other members to tour it when Superintendent Little holds a public tour of the facility.

NEXT MEETING DATE – Wednesday, November 9, 2022. CO will be out of the office the first two weeks in November. SE, Wendy Bogusz or DB-U can post the agenda.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion by FB and second by JW, the meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m. JH, aye; DB-U, aye; CM, aye; JW, aye; GG, aye; FB, aye; FW, aye.**

Respectfully submitted,  
BettyLou Mallet  
Scribe

Meeting materials: Agenda 10/19/2022; Draft Minutes 09/21/2022; Notes on financial forecasting; 5-year summary of projected revenues and expenditures; A-1 Annual Budget Process policy; Free Cash Analysis 09/20/2022.

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Cherry Sheets Link - (1) Webinar: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Cherry Sheets - YouTube

Approved by Montague Finance Committee – Vote November 9, 2022