

MONTAGUE FINANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE
Draft Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/795085553>

PRESENT: Chair Francia Wisnewski, Vice Chair, Gregory Garrison, Clerk Dorinda Bell-Upp, John Hanold, Jennifer Waryas and Fred Bowman, members; Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Town Administrator Steve Ellis and Scribe BettyLou Mallet.

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathy Lynch, Chair Montague Cultural Council, Maggie Martin, Montague Cultural Council, Tom Bergeron, DPW Superintendent, Suzanne LoMonto, River Culture, Walter Ramsey, Assistant Town Administrator, Ariel Elan, CIC member.

ABSENT: Chris Menegoni, Finance Committee member

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – FW called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting is being recorded as well as aired on MCTV. Roll call of FinCom members reveals a quorum.
2. **REQUEST FROM MONTAGUE CULTURAL COUNCIL** – Kathy Lynch submitted a grant proposal to the FinCom members for their review as well as requested to meet and discuss at tonight's meeting. The grant is through the Massachusetts Cultural Council for local cultural councils. She described the council's local duties regarding this grant and is asking for possible matching funds from the town. Kathy stated there are new programs the council would like to explore and coordinate with the River Culture. The FinCom will review the documentation submitted and discuss at the next meeting.
3. **REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES: January 25, 2023** – The FinCom members received the draft minutes of the January 25, 2023 meeting to review. No questions. **On a motion by JH and second by FB, the minutes of the Montague Finance Committee meeting January 25, 2023 were approved as written. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW abstained. Approved 5 aye, 1 abstention.**
4. **DPW BUDGET DISCUSSION INCLUDING SPECIAL ARTICLES** – Tom Bergeron spoke with the members regarding the two articles placed on the STM warrant. The request for \$80,000 to replace the 2010 Ford truck that is completely worn out and \$100,000 for a one-ton dump truck with plow/sander which replaces a 2008 F350 which is now only used for summer projects. GG stated the CIC had discussed and recommends these two articles. The FinCom discussed the discretionary funds, distribution of the balance remaining and the purchasing timeline for these trucks. While Tom was in attendance, the members also raised questions regarding the split costs for the shared employee between the DPW and CWF. Tom stated there will be a meeting between Steve and Chelsea to discuss as it is still in the early planning stages. JW asked questions regarding the FY24 budget line items which were answered by CO.

The Finance Committee voted on the following STM warrant articles:

ARTICLE 16: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$80,000 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a pick-up truck with plow and sander, including any and all incidental

or related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. Moved by JH and second by FB. No discussion. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.

ARTICLE 17 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$100,000 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a one-ton dump truck with plow and sander, including any and all incidental or related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. No discussion. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.

The Committee thanked Superintendent Bergeron for attending and the discussion.

5. MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON STM FINANCIAL WARRANT ARTICLES:

The Committee reviewed the following STM warrant articles and votes taken.

A. \$10,000 for green burial area at Highland Cemetery

ARTICLE 1 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$10,000 for the purpose of preparing a section of the Highland Cemetery for green burials, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. No discussion. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.

B. Canal District Stabilization Fund (\$250K received will be transferred after 7/1/23)

ARTICLE 2 – That the Town vote to establish a special purpose Canal District Utility Improvements Stabilization Fund in accordance with MGL Chapter 40, Section 5B and further to accept the provisions of the fourth paragraph of MGL Chapter 40 Section 5B and pursuant to such acceptance to allocate 100 percent of the First Light easement payments (\$250,000) to said Canal District Utility Improvements Stabilization Fund, effective for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023. JH motion and second by GG. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.

C. \$40,000 for FY23 Reserve Fund

ARTICLE 6 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$40,000 for the purpose of supplementing the FY23 Reserve Fund Budget, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. No discussion. GG motion and second by JH. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.

D. \$4,000 annual stipend for Great Falls Farmers Market Manager

ARTICLE 7 – That the Town vote to amend Schedule II to add a Great Falls Farmers Market Manager with an annual stipend of \$4,000. This is a new position. GG moved and second by FB. No discussion. FB, aye; GG, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.

E. \$2,500 for FY23 Great Falls Farmers Market budget

ARTICLE 8 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,500 for the purpose of funding a budget for the Great Falls Farmers Market budget for FY23, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. GG motion and second by FB. No discussion. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.

- F. \$2,500 annual stipend for Hearing Officer and \$625 prorated**
ARTICLE 9 – That the Town vote to establish a Hearing Officer, amend Schedule II to add a Hearing Officer with an annual stipend of \$2,500, and appropriate \$625 for the prorated annual amount for the remainder of FY23, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. GG motion and second by FB. No discussion. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.
- G. \$1,500 for sealing skatepark**
ARTICLE 11 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,500 for the purpose of sealing the concrete surface of the Unity Skatepark, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. GG motion and second by FB. No discussion. JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; JW, aye; FB, aye; FW, aye.
- H. \$2,000 for evaluation of Blacksmith Shop**
ARTICLE 12 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,000 for the purpose of conducting a formal evaluation of what is known as “The Blacksmith Shop”, located at 12 Station Street, Map 43, Lot 119 in Montague Center, to determine the feasibility for retention and restoration or demolition whether partial or total, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. JH moved and second by FB. There were a few questions regarding this building. JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; JW, aye; FB, aye; FW, aye.
- I. \$32,250 for TF main library feasibility study**
ARTICLE 13 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$32,250 for the purpose of funding a feasibility study for the main library in Turners Falls, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from the remaining balance of Article #27 of the May 6, 2017 Annual Town Meeting, which appropriated funds for a Libraries Building Study. GG motion and second by JH. No discussion. JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; FB, aye; JW, aye; FW, aye.
- J. \$2,500,000 CWF screw pumps**
ARTICLE 14 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,500,000 for the purpose of replacing the Clean Water Facility Screw Pumps, including any and all incidental or related costs, said sum to be raised from CWF Long Term Debt. GG motion and second by JH. JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; JW, abstain; FB, aye; FW, aye. (5 aye, 1 abstain)
- K. \$68,000 for CWF work utility vehicle/transit van and charger**
ARTICLE 15 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$68,000 for the purpose of purchasing a transit van and charging station, included any and all incidental or related costs, said sum to be raised from CWF Retained Earnings. GG motion and second by FB. JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; JW, aye; FB, aye; FW, aye.
- L. \$80,000 for pick-up with plow and sander (see discussion and vote above)**
- M. \$100,000 for one-ton dump truck with plow/sander (see discussion and vote above)**
- N. \$52,500 for inspection vehicle**
ARTICLE 18 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$52,500 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a municipal inspection vehicle, including purchase and installation of a charging station and any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. FB moved and second by FB. JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; JW, aye; FB, aye; FW, aye.

O. \$230,000 replace Colle roof

ARTICLE 19 – That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$230,000 for the purpose of replacing the roof of the Colle Building, located at 85 Avenue A, including any and all incidental or related costs, said sum to be raised from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation. GG motion and second by JH. JH, aye; GG, aye; DB-U, aye; JW, aye; FB< aye; FW, aye.

P. \$660,000 (WAG) for Airport Building funded by FCTS aviation program grant

ARTICLE 20 – Has been removed from the warrant.

6. REVIEW AND UPDATE BUDGET CALENDAR – The Committee reviewed the budget calendar. The Board of Health meeting will be deferred until more information is known regarding the Medical Director position.

7. UPDATE FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Steve stated the Selectboard will be making decisions on personnel as part of the budget making process and will ask the Finance Committee to make the financial decisions. He discussed several considerations the Selectboard made regarding personnel.

FW gave a recap of last night's joint meeting with the Gill and Montague Finance Committees, Gill and Montague Selectboards and the GMRSD. A thorough report was given and a productive meeting was held.

8. FUTURE MEETING TOPICS – Public Safety and Schedule I and II as well as the scribe position will be discussed at next week's meeting.

9. TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS OF POSTING – none

10. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by JH and second by JW, the meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m. FB, aye; JW, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

BettyLou Mallet
Scribe