

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded:
<https://vimeo.com/915396088>

Finance Committee Chair Francia Wisnewski called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Finance Committee members present: Chair Francia Wisnewski. Vice Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp, Clerk Fred Bowman and member Chris Menegoni

Finance Committee members absent: Greg Garrison, John Hanold, and Jennifer Waryas

Others present: Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey, Airport Manager Bryan Camden, Selectboard Members Rich Kuklewicz and Matt Lord, and Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen

The meeting was recorded by MCTV as well as by Carolyn Olsen.

Meeting minutes:

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to approve the minutes of February 14, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

FY25 Airport Budget:

The Airport Commission met on February 13th and approved a revised budget that is \$32,750 less than the original request. Changes include eliminating the \$12,500 for capital outlay that is now included in an article for the March 14, 2024 Special Town Meeting for the local share of all three phases of the Pioneer Ramp project. Also eliminated was the \$8,000 for an additional town payment, which acted more as a buffer for other expenses. The remaining \$12,250 in reductions were spread across 12 line items in amounts varying from \$500 to \$1,750.

Mr. Camden assured the committee that the reduced budget can still provide adequate and safe operation of the facility while trying to reduce the burden on taxpayers.

Under the current scenario, the town would need to contribute \$107,593 from taxation in addition to the \$26,041 to be transferred from Town Sale of Real Estate to cover the balance of the Pioneer purchase debt service not funded from the FAA grant.

Ms. Wisnewski asked Mr. Camden what questions he was expecting and when he plans to hold a public forum. Mr. Camden said that he had already had several questions from a town meeting member, and that he hopes to have a public forum within the next two week. The forum may either be in person at the airport or via zoom, but anyone is welcome to call or email Mr. Camden with questions at any time.

Ms. Bell-Upp asked Mr. Camden what the goals are for reducing the need for reliance on taxation for FY26. Mr. Camden replied that he and Mr. Ramsey are making some forward progress with Eversource

but this may still take considerable time, so the Airport Commission will focus on bumping up other revenues.

Ms. Wisnewski asked Mr. Kuklewicz if the Selectboard intended to have a 45 minute pre-town meeting. Mr. Kuklewicz isn't sure one is needed for the Special Town Meeting. Ms. Bell-Upp thinks people will mostly be interested in the airport articles, and could have their questions answered at the public forum.

Review of articles for March 14, 2024 Special Town Meeting:

- a. Add position of Truck Driver/Laborer in Training at Grade B

Mr. Bowman moved to recommend adding the position of Truck Driver/Laborer at Grade B. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

- b. \$1,974 for prior year Treasurer Department out of grade pay

Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend appropriating \$1,974 for prior year out of grade pay in the Treasurer's department, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Bell-Upp and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

- c. \$300 for prior year Libraries Department longevity pay

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend appropriating \$300 for prior year longevity pay in the Library Department, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

- d. \$8,481 for FY24 Building Inspector budget

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend appropriating \$8,481 to increase the FY24 Building Inspector budget, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

- e. \$23,000 for FY24 Selectboard budget

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend appropriating \$23,000 to increase the FY24 Selectboard budget, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

- f. \$10,000 for FY24 Airport budget

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend appropriating \$10,000 to increase the FY24 Airport Wages & Expenses budget, to be raised from the FY25 Airport Capital Outlay budget. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

g. \$24,261 transfer to Airport from Sale of Real Estate

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend transferring \$24,261 to the Airport Enterprise Fund, to be raised from RRA Sale of Real Estate. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

h. \$128,000 transfer to Airport

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend transferring \$128,000 to the Airport Enterprise Fund, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye

i. \$152,315 for Town share of Airport grant project

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend appropriating \$152,315 for the Town’s share of the Pioneer Ramp project, to be raised from the Town Capital Stabilization Fund. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.

Mr. Menegoni moved to amend the motion so that the funding source was Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Bowman. Ms. Bell-Upp noted that the amounts for the first two years would not be considered capital, but the final year would be capital. Mr. Ramsey added that the Capital Improvement Committee considers the project as a whole to be a capital project and had assumed the funding would be from Town Capital Stabilization. Ms. Olsen was asked how much Free Cash was available. At the end of the Special Town Meeting, the current expectation is a balance of \$335K so this would reduce that amount to \$207K. There is currently \$229K available for the Annual Town Meeting which would also need to cover any additional non-capital special articles. Ms. Olsen reminded everyone that regardless of tonight’s recommendation, the funding source could be amended on town meeting floor. Mr. Kuklewicz said that this type of project would generally be funded from Town Capital Stabilization.

The vote on the amended motion failed.

Bell-Upp – Nay, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Nay

The vote on the original motion passed.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Nay, Wisnewski – Aye

j. \$125,000 for Wastewater Asset Vulnerability Inventory

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend appropriating \$125,000 for a Wastewater Asset Vulnerability Inventory, to be raised from the CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye

k. \$90,000 for DPW Skid Steer

Mr. Bowman moved to recommend appropriating \$90,000 to purchase and equip a skid steer for the DPW, to be raised from the Town Capital Stabilization Fund. Seconded by Ms. Bell-Upp and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

l. \$222,880 to replace South Ferry Road Culvert

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend appropriating \$222,880 to replace the South Ferry Road Culvert, to be raised from the Town Capital Stabilization Fund. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

m. Revoke Opioid Stabilization Fund authorization

Ms. Bell-Upp moved to recommend revoking the authorization for the Opioid Stabilization Fund and the automatic deposits of opioid settlement funds therein. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

Assistant Town Administrator Updates: none

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting: Ms. Wisnewski suggested that anyone having additional questions on the 10-year history of vehicle purchases contact Ms. Olsen or the appropriate department head directly.

Finance Committee Adjournment

Mr. Bowman makes the motion to adjourn at 6:34 PM. Seconded by Ms. Bell-Upp and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Olsen

Next Meeting – February 28, 2024 - FCTS

Documents and exhibits:

Minutes of February 14, 2024
Airport FY25 Budget Request
STM Motions and background