

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 6:00 PM
This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded:
<https://vimeo.com/982262386>

Finance Committee Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Finance Committee members present: Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp, Vice Chair Fred Bowman, Clerk Chris Menegoni and members Kristi Bodin, Francia Wisnewski, and John Hanold

Finance Committee members absent: Jennifer Waryas

Others present: Town Administrator Walter Ramsey and Town Accountants Angelica Desroches and Carolyn Olsen. Erin Leigh-Hoffman from The Recorder.

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

Meeting minutes:

Mr. Hanold moved to approve the minutes of July 10, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bodin – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski - Aye

Fund Sheffield After School Program, source of funding

Mr. Ramsey updated the Committee on funding needed for the Sheffield afterschool program. The school found out the day before school started that they did not qualify for the grant that usually covers the afterschool program. They need \$100,000 to fund the program with \$25,000 coming from the School Choice Revolving and a request to Montague for the other \$75,000. Mr. Ramsey reported that if the funding source was free cash or Cannabis impact fees it would require a vote at a special town meeting, but if the Selectboard voted to use ARPA funds it would not require a STM. Discussed that at this time there are no other pressing needs for a fall STM so the Selectboard would be inclined to use ARPA funding. Only current non urgent needs are to appropriate PEG funds to MCCI and to replenish the reserve fund.

- Ms. Wisnewski stated that she understands the need for the program and is supportive of the funding. She would like to request more information about who the program serves and what the future plan for funding would be. She would like to know if this is a one year fix or if it is expected in future years.
- Ms. Bell-Upp stated her support for the program but also discussed that if the funding source for the program shifts to being a Town responsibility she would like to see it become a more robust and inclusive program that is available to all grade levels.
- Mr. Menegoni reported that during the Capital Improvement Committee meeting they also discussed this funding and he stated that the CIC was in support of using ARPA funding. If future grant years are impacted then the school should make this part of their budget.
- Mr. Hanold was in support of funding the program for this full year due to the short notice not funding it would impact the parents of the community. However, he discussed that the funding for it for next year needs to be discussed now with giving parents plenty of time to make decisions

Mr. Hanold moved to support up to \$75,000 from ARPA funds. Seconded by Ms. Bell-Upp.
Bodin – Aye, Bowman- Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye
Bell-Upp – Abstained (due to children in the program)

Reserve Fund Transfer

The Town Accountant is requesting the following transfers to cover expenses related to the untimely retirement of Ms. Olsen.

Amount requested	to Acct	Description	Current Balance
\$ 9,464	001-5-135-5193	Vac Buyback	\$0
\$ 3,500	001-5-135-5192	Sick Leave BB	\$0
\$ 7,887	001-5-135-5111	Acct Wages FT	\$71,534
\$ 2,649	001-5-135-5420	Acct Supplies	\$2,100

Mr. Menegoni moved to approve the transfer of \$23,500 from the Reserve Fund to various accounts in the Town Accountant budget as noted on the request form. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

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

Providing Extra Emergency Funding For The GMRSD

Ms. Olsen and Mr. Ramsey researched the options and determined that this was best left as having the GMRSD request additional funding above the affordable assessment as a special article when needed.

- Mr. Bowman stated that he would like to see DESE change how they do things.
- Mr. Hanold has concerns about how this will impact the Town in the long run. Discussed keeping an eye on sources of free cash to make sure that the Town is adjusting the estimates overtime to make sure the affordable assessment level is accurate.

Potential Articles for Fall Special Town Meeting

No critical timely needs.

Updates from Town Administrator

Mr. Ramsey reported that the Town has had two notable bid openings. The first is for the screw pump project which came in \$240,000 over budget plus \$89,000 in recommended contingency. Discussed funding this difference with ARPA funds. The price difference is due to a late determination from the federal government that the screw pumps have to be made out of US steel.

- Mr. Menegoni reported that earlier today the CIC met and approved this project and funding. Mr. Ramsey reported that the library basement renovation bid also came in \$19,000 over budget. This was due to unexpected electrical upgrades that will be needed to provide power to the heat pump system. The Selectboard will also be discussing the use of ARPA funds for this project.

Mr. Ramsey then discussed that the Town will be shifting to having Annual Town Meeting on a Wednesday night instead of Saturday. Discussed that many communities in the Commonwealth currently are doing this and they are hoping that this shift will help with the current issues with quorum. The meeting is set for Wednesday, May 7th with a hold on Wednesday, May 14th if the meeting is not concluded in the first Wednesday.

Mr. Ramsey discussed that the pay and class study is going to be presented to the Selectboard on Monday, September 9th by the Collins Center.

Next Meetings

November 6th – begin discussion on budget process and schedule.

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting:**Adjournment**

Ms. Bodin moved makes the motion to adjourn at 7 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits:

Minutes of September 4, 2024