

**MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 5:30 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 5:31 PM.

**Finance Committee members present:** Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp, Vice Chair Fred Bowman, Clerk Chris Menegoni and members Francia Wisnewski (entered meeting at 6 pm) and John Hanold

**Finance Committee members absent:** Jennifer Waryas

**Others present:** Town Administrator Walter Ramsey, Town Accountant Angelica Desroches, MCTV Dean Garvin, Library Director Caitlin Kelley, CWF Superintendent Chelsey Little

The meeting was recorded by MCTV as well as by Angelica Desroches

**Meeting minutes:**

Mr. Menegoni requested an additional comment be added to the minutes that the driveway project and mini split project at the airport would not have any additional cost to the taxpayers.

Mr. Bowman moved to approve the minutes of January 15, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni and approved.

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

**FY2026 Library Budget**

- Ms. Kelley gave an overview of her budget including proposed staffing changes. The goal is to split the library technician position into two positions. The first is an adult services coordinator who can work on increasing adult services including outreach and technology services. The second position would be a library assistant/technician position who would be working the desk more and have a primary task of cataloging. The change would be an additional \$27,000 to \$35,000 per year depending on whether current staff are willing to step into these roles or not. Ms. Kelley also is looking to increase the wages of the library assistants to retain staff. This is not in the budget currently but is something she wanted noted.
- Ms. Bell-Upp wondered if the adult services coordinator would be required to be bilingual. Ms. Kelley responded that she did not think that it was legal to require that position to be bilingual but that she would be willing to pay for language classes if the need arises.
- Mr. Hanold inquired whether both positions would be full-time. Ms. Kelley stated that the adult outreach coordinator would be 35 hours but that the library assistant/technician could be 30 hours.
- Mr. Hanold asked if this change would solve some of the turnover problems that the library is currently facing. Ms. Kelley reported that the benefited positions are not the ones for which she sees a lot of turnover so she would imagine that combining hours into benefited positions will help her retain staff.
- Mr. Hanold brought up the library building grant that the library was just accepted into. He discussed that there appeared to be three options: building a new library, expanding the

Carnegie library, or picking up the Carnegie library and moving it to a new location. Ms. Kelley discussed the Town will have some input on the options and that the third option of picking up the Carnegie Library and relocating it to a new location to help better expand the building is still an option and comes at a cost of around \$1.2 million. Mr. Hanold reported that maintaining that option is important with how unique and historic the library is.

- Ms. Bell-Upp requested more clarity about whether the new adult services coordinator position would have any overlap with the new COA position that is being requested. Ms. Kelley reassured the Committee that they would not be doing the same work but that they do often work together and accent each other's work.
- Mr. Hanold discussed whether the children's librarians work would continue with the adult programs being better attended. Ms. Kelley reported that unfortunately the biggest barrier with the children's programs currently is that they are no longer allowed to use the upstairs space for programming due to ADA issues. She stated that finding offsite locations for programming can be difficult and sometimes leads to a decline in planning them. Mr. Hanold questioned whether the library had any contingency on what if they lost some of their grant funding. Ms. Kelley answered that none of the staff are currently grant funded and that the library has a healthy programming budget currently.
- Mr. Ramsey reported to the Finance Committee that the Selectboard has heard the staffing change requests from the library but has not made any formal decisions around the request. Mr. Ramsey requested that Ms. Kelley discuss her special article request for FY26. Ms. Kelley gave the Finance Committee an overview of the current five-year plan based on accessibility studies that have been done. She is working towards completing the ADA upgrades that are necessary at all libraries with a \$10,000 a year special article for at least the next 5 years. By the end of that she hopes to have at least two of the libraries fully ADA accessible.

#### **FY2026 CWF Budget**

- Ms. Little presented her budget to the Committee. The budget is primarily level funded other than changes that are contractual like salaries and vendor contracts. Ms. Little highlighted the changes to the pager pay, sludge disposal, water expense line due to new water meters being installed, and the Millers Falls overage line. She gave an overview of the Millers Falls overage and stated that the timing of when the large water leak was discovered has not been able to be reflected on the budget yet due to timing.
- Mr. Hanold inquired as to whether the DPW is still looking and trying to repair the I&I leaks. Mr. Ramsey answered that the DPW continues to look for and repair them. There has been a lot of assessment of the issues and this spring there are 50 manholes that are being repaired with grant funding to help with I&I. There is also a capital request coming that focuses on lining pipes and repairing manholes.
- Mr. Menegoni wondered if it was possible for the plant to use rainwater for their chlorination process to reduce potable water usage and reduce costs of the water bill. Ms. Kelley reported that now that they realize how much water they were using with the new meters they plan to reuse their treated effluent water to cycle it back into the system for chlorination. This comes at no extra costs and the infrastructure already exists for them to do this and they have done it many times in the past.
- Ms. Kelley stated that she also did put forth a staffing change to the Selectboard to upgrade the current administrative assistant to an office manager. This is to help catch up with some of the

required reporting of the department. Currently they are 4 months behind on reports which is causing them to be audited in March. If they can get caught up, they will be able to avoid a finding of noncompliance.

- Ms. Kelley discussed overall feeling very positive about the finances of the sewer fund. The rates were able to decrease this year, and the projects have been able to be funded from retained earnings that were created. Mr. Hanold stated this would be important to share at Town Meeting.
- Ms. Bell-Upp asked Ms. Little to review the tax share portion of CWF. Ms. Little discussed that it is based on a formula that has been around for awhile that was created to try and capture the cost of I&I treatment at the sewer plant. Overall, the formula is the best possible way to capture that cost. Mr. Hanold wondered if it was ever possible to get I&I to a zero infiltration. Ms. Little stated that it probably would never be zero due to problems always arising after other problems being fixed. Mr. Ramsey reported that the Town is now being more proactive about prevention and less reactive. Ms. Desroches inquired whether rates would have to increase if the tax share portion decreased as I&I repairs are being done and Ms. Little confirmed that they probably would.

#### **Updates from Town Administrator**

- Mr. Ramsey plans to attend the MMA conference this weekend to hear about the governor's budget and other financial forecasts for next year.
- STM articles will be finalized on Monday by the Selectboard. The Finance Committee should be prepared to speak on the reserve fund and the bid overrun articles.
- The three unions are currently all in active negotiations but there is still a lot to discuss. Hoping to have a more finalized budget number by next month.
- There is a new finance committee member that has spoken with the moderator and the Town Administrator. They should be attending meetings soon.

#### **Next Meetings**

- a. 2/5/25 Meeting with SB and GMRSD is in person at 5:30.

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

#### **Adjournment**

Mr. Bowman makes the motion to adjourn at 6:48 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Angelica Desroches

#### **Documents and exhibits:**

Minutes of January 22, 2025