

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 6 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, Leigh Rae (6:05pm), Chris Menegoni, and John Hanold

Finance Committee members absent: Jennifer Waryas, Francia Wisnewski

Others present: Town Administrator Walter Ramsey, Town Accountant Angelica Desroches

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

Meeting minutes:

Mr. Hanold moved to approve the minutes of March 26, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

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

Wage and Class Article:

- Mr. Menegoni questioned the effect this article has on the clerical workers. Mr. Ramsey responded that they would all get a minimum of a 3% raise under the proposed new contract. There is no COLA this year. It is a transition year with the implementation of a new scale. This is only to fund NAGE and UE unions, non-union and police contracts will be presented in the fall STM.
 - Ms. Bell- Upp moved to recommend appropriation \$125,154 for the implementation of pay and class study and collective bargaining agreements with United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America and the National Association of Government Employees with \$98,892 to be raised from Taxation and \$26,262 to be raised from Sewer Revenues.
 - Mr. Hanold seconded. And voted unanimously.
 - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Rae – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye

Review Draft FY26 Finance Committee Report

- Ms. Desroches highlighted two sections she felt should be updated including a section on how taxes work and the notable accomplishments of the year. The consensus was to remove the section explaining the relationship between values and levy and how it affects the rate. The Committee brainstormed ideas for accomplishments. Mr. Ramsey suggested noting the Town Accountant transition and Ms. Bell-Upp suggested the Affordable Assessment review from last summer.
- Finance Committee discussed how to include the tax impact of the budget in the report. Mr. Hanold was cautious about forecasting or including a rate with the values not being known until the fall. Ms. Desroches shared that she has seen other communities include a rate in their

budget discussions. Ms. Rae added that maybe adding a range of the overall impact on the tax bill without listing a specific rate might cover Ms. Waryas desire to have the tax impact included without feeling like we are making a specific promise of rate. The suggestion to use average Montague home value, average Montague tax bill, and average Montague tax bill increase based on FY25 values and the FY26 levy increase was favored by all Committee members.

- Mr. Hanold wanted to adjust the conclusion section of the report to discuss specific big projects that are planned soon. Ms. Rae suggested also highlighting the possible outside funding source disruptions the Town may see because of changes in government funding.
- Ms. Desroches volunteered to make the changes in the report and send back to the Committee with the other meeting documents for next week's meeting.

Updates from Town Administrator:

- Town Moderator will not be able to return in time for the Annual Town Meeting. Discussions with Ray Godin and others to find someone to fill in.

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting

- Community Compact grant received to cover the costs of implementation of the financial software conversion set for July 1, 2025.

Adjournment

Mr. Menegoni makes the motion to adjourn at 6:51 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits: