

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 9, 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, Francia Wisnewski, Leigh Rae (6:02pm), Jennifer Waryas (6:01pm), and John Hanold

Finance Committee members absent: Chris Menegoni

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 April 02, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye

Finalize Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting:

- Ms. Waryas was satisfied with the addition of the tax impact but would like to still see in the future more information about the impact of the votes and grounding the funding sources in more of a real way that can help the citizens understand the full impact of the decisions being made.
- Ms. Rae inquired about new growth regarding utility companies and Ms. Desroches answered that new growth is values of infrastructure or property upgrades captured in the first year it is completed.
- Ms. Wisnewski wanted to add more to the narrative to make sure things are clear to a town meeting member that doesn't follow the Finance Committee meetings. She wanted more details about the specific changes to the budget this year in staffing, revenues, and fiscal risks. Suggested the addition of a glossary. Ms. Wisnewski mentioned wanting more information about the new staff leadership of the Town and where the town has come from/where it is going. Mr. Hanold stated some of these things were in the report but were not as explicit as Ms. Wisnewski might want.
- Ms. Waryas asked for the timeline for the report. Ms. Desroches stated that the report is set to be printed and mailed next week. With this timeline in mind Ms. Wisnewski and Ms. Waryas stated they could send some updates via email, but that Committee would leave it up to Ms. Desroches discretion regarding incorporating the edits.

Finalize Motions and Background:

- Mr. Hanold observed that in the general fund budget background there was repetition of the topics and highlights. Ms. Desroches stated that she was following the model of past years from the previous Town Accountant. Mr. Hanold and Ms. Rae discussed combining these sections, so the topics are covered once.

- Ms. Bell-Upp and Ms. Waryas highlighted the description of trash increase. Ms. Waryas asked to highlight the new vendor and the change in more of a positive manner. Committee members wanted to make sure the information was still highlighted since it was a big increase.
- Ms. Rae suggested having large structural changes be brought up at the meeting and discussed, but having members send specific sentence edits directly to Ms. Desroches. This will help make sure everyone's opinions are heard and incorporated directly.
- Mr. Ramsey highlighted the PILOT agreement background and that the details of the PILOT are not to be discussed but that it is only the authority of negotiating the PILOT that is being voted. Mr. Hanold stated that this article was very well written and was very clear of the impacts without breaking the executive sessions lines.
- Ms. Bell-Upp mentioned that at the next meeting members should think about what articles they would be willing to discuss at the town meeting. She also stated that Article 25 is the only article that is directly from the Finance Committee.
- Ms. Wisnewski wondered if we had mentioned the OPEB trust fund. Mr. Hanold discussed that it was mentioned at the end of Article 25.

Updates from Town Administrator:

- Moderator John Dempsey has resigned. The replacement is Elizabeth Irving and Ray Godin has volunteered to help coach.
- Reported questions about how the budget addresses tariffs and the trade war. There is no clear answer but that the Town is ready to have discussions with Finance Committee and town meetings as things unfold into the year. Mr. Hanold reported that there is money in reserves but that a specific plan to address isn't possible at this time with the quick changes of tariff policy. Ms. Wisnewski questioned whether the Town has experienced any holds on federal grants at this time to which Mr. Ramsey and Ms. Desroches expressed that they had not heard of any yet. Mr. Hanold reported that most of the budget is personnel related but that he does expect some impact on the capital budgets if things continue.

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting

- Ms. Rae questioned what needs to be prepared by the Finance Committee for the pre-Town Meeting. Mr. Ramsey relayed that he sees the pre-Town Meeting as more of a slideshow presentation that walks through each article. He is planning on having some department heads there for some of the larger articles.

Adjournment

Ms. Rae makes the motion to adjourn at 7:09 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits: