

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 30, 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, Jennifer Waryas, Chris Menegoni, 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 09, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye,
Waryas – Abstain

Review of Pre-Town Meeting:

- Ms. Bell-Upp and Ms. Rae acknowledged the work of Town Administrator Walter Ramsey in the meeting and how well the meeting went. Mr. Hanold and Ms. Rae also expressed some disappointment with the turnout of the Town Meeting members despite the emails and numerous attempts to reach out.
- Ms. Wisnewski raised concern with how the Finance Committee's role in the budget process was being presented during the meeting. She would like to make sure it is clearer who is driving the process and getting credit for the work the Finance Committee puts in to set the budget. Mr. Ramsey reported that he did not mean to mis-speak if he did and that the budget process is a collaborative process in which both groups create budgets and then they reconcile their budgets in the end.
- Ms. Wisnewski inquired about whether there were explanations given for the abstentions in the budget documents. Ms. Desroches reported that if it was clearly stated why someone abstained she noted it but otherwise she did not want to imply.
- Ms. Waryas mentioned that she does not think the vote counts are clear and that not everyone understands the orders. She also discussed that there should be more room for people to vote their conscious and advocate for themselves without feeling coerced into voting yes with the group. Mr. Hanold agreed that everyone should be able to represent and respect others' opinions. Ms. Desroches presented possibly giving more training materials or writing things more clearly for future years to help with transparency.

Assign speakers to articles for ATM:

- Mr. Hanold stated that he had some familiarity with the financial policy article and would like to present and speak on that article at the Town Meeting.
- Ms. Bell-Upp volunteered to speak on behalf of the Airport articles.

- Ms. Waryas questioned the Committee on how they would like to handle it if a member did vote against an article. She would like to share her opinion on her vote but also would like to be respectful of the Committee as a whole. Mr. Bowman stated that she is also a Town Meeting member so she can also share her opinions as a representation of herself. Mr. Hanold and Ms. Bell-Upp also agreed that if someone voted no or abstained that they should share that opinion with the Town Meeting members on why they felt that way and that the Committee respects everyone's opinions.
- Ms. Waryas reported that she would be willing to speak to the Clean Water Facility articles and that she feels that these are usually explained thoroughly and the need for them is clearly to catch up on backlogged necessary maintenance.
- Mr. Menegoni stated he would be willing to speak to whatever articles are necessary. He knows that Greg Garrison from CIC will be present at Town Meeting, but he can also help to speak to the DPW capital articles if necessary.
- The Committee all agreed that the PILOT article will bring up some conversation and that during the pre-town meeting it was evident that there was some hesitancy with that article. Mr. Hanold agreed to be the one to speak to the article.
- Mr. Ramsey brought up that the Finance Committee should be prepared to speak to the funding source of the last capital articles given that they come from stabilizations that were setup for very specific purposes. Mr. Hanold discussed that the Committee should also be prepared to speak on the free cash usage and that this year we have the free cash and that there is no guarantee of getting that level of free cash in future years.

Updates from Town Administrator:

- None at this time.

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting:

- Reviewed future meetings for the Finance Committee. There will need to be a meeting in June and possibly July for end-of-year transfers and any possible reserve fund transfers that are needed at the end of year.

Adjournment

Ms. Bell-Upp makes the motion to adjourn at 6:50 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits: