

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 10, 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, Chris Menegoni, Francia Wisnewski, Josh Bell

Finance Committee members absent: Jennifer Waryas, Leigh Rae

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

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

Meeting minutes:

Mr. Menegoni moved to approve the minutes of August 6, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

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

Introduction to 5 year forecast spreadsheet:

- Ms. Desroches gave an overview of the 5-year forecasting spreadsheet she made at training with the state. It includes 5 years of actuals that it uses to calculate a percentage trend of increase. It then allows you to project out the next 5 years using that or any other percentage that the users deem appropriate. The forecast has detailed tabs for all different revenue sources with balances for stabilization and free cash. On the expenditure side there is a 5-year history of the actual expenses for all departments. The spreadsheet also has a position control tab that allows you to input the salaries of every position for the next 6 years and that feeds into the expenditure summary. Ms. Bell-Upp questioned if the forecast takes into consideration the Tech School or library projects. Ms. Desroches responded that at this time both the costs are expected to affect the Town past the current 5-year projection timeline so that hasn't been entered as a scenario yet. Ms. Bell-Upp inquired as to whether it would tie to the 5-year capital plan. To which Ms. Desroches answered is the hope that on the other funding pages and other expenses we can start to build in the funding sources and constraints on the capital plan to build some guidelines around affordability of capital. Mr. Menegoni mentioned that the 5-year capital plan is also in flux and that some projects do get moved forward years to make the plan more affordable too. Discussed that both forecasts would be in flux and changing with each other. Ms. Wisnewski wondered what the big highlights of the forecast are, specifically what trends are being seen and what areas the financial committee should focus on. Ms. Desroches answered the currently the spreadsheet is not built to a specific projection but is being presented as a tool for the finance committee to use as we move forward with the budget year.

Updates from Six Town Regionalization Planning Board:

- Ms. Wisnewski and Mr. Bowman questioned whether this is supposed to be a Town Meeting vote or a ballot vote. They requested Mr. Ramsey ask legal about that.
- Ms. Bell-Upp reviewed the STRPB presentation. She highlighted that the goal is for long term stability of programs and finances. Discussed that enrollment is declining, state aid is remaining flat, and costs are increasing. Provided a brief overview of the school changes of where the middle school and high school would be located. She reported that the goal is not necessarily about cost savings but increasing educational opportunities for the school to attract more students and keep the district more sustainable. Ms. Wisnewski inquired if the affordable assessment would continue. Ms. Bell-Upp responded that a new agreement would have to be brought to the new district to be considered.

Updates from Town Administrator

- The Special Town Meeting is set for October 22 at 6:30pm. Articles are due on September 29. Pre-town meeting is set for October 15th at 6pm. Mr. Ramsey gave a quick rundown of known articles at this time.
 - There are prior year bills that will need to be funded through free cash.
 - The non-union personnel are being moved to the new wage scale in a similar manner to the way NAGE was moved. 27,000 funded through free cash, 2,400 through sewer.
 - The NEPBA Sergeants union has settled with additional steps to their scale and with each sergeant getting two steps this fiscal year. 53,000 funded through free cash.
 - The insurance increases for the midyear insurance rate increase will be requested to be funded through taxation. 245,000 for general funds, 5,600 for airport, and 24,000 for sewer. Reported the Town is looking at other options at this time.
 - DPW has two possible capital articles for South St Culvert and Avenue A streetlights.
 - Airport has a request to increase their spending on revolving funds again. Experiencing more business than anticipated after the last increase.
 - The Assessors have another PILOT agreement with Kearsarge that will need to be authorized.

Next Meeting dates/topics:

- Ms. Bell-Upp questioned if we are hearing and voting articles on October 1. Ms. Desroches offered an additional meeting on September 24th to hear about the articles and then have the vote on October 1. Ms. Bell-Upp stated she would like the two meetings, so they have information before they vote.
- Ms. Desroches brought up the fact that the Capital Improvement Committee still wants to come and meet with Finance Committee soon to discuss their current plan. Ms. Wisnewski relayed that pushing it until after the Special Town Meeting makes sense.

Adjournment

Mr. Menegoni makes the motion to adjourn at 6:56 PM. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Bell – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski—Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits: