

**MEETING OF MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026 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, Josh Bell, Leigh Rae, Chris Menegoni, Francia Wisnewski

**Finance Committee members absent:** Jennifer Waryas

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

The meeting was recorded by MCTV.

**Meeting minutes:**

- Ms. Rae moved to approve the minutes of February 25, 2026. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski and approved.
  - Bell-Upp – Aye, Rae—Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Abstain

**Vote Schedule I and Schedule II:**

- **Schedule I Elected Officials**
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend Schedule I Elected Officials salaries as presented. Ms. Wisnewski seconded the motion.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye
- **Schedule II Appointed Officials**
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend Schedule II Appointed Officials salaries as presented. Mr. Bell seconded the motion.
  - Ms. Wisnewski asked if the new wages and salaries were shifted equitably with the wage and class study. Mr. Ramsey reported that the study was completed by the Collins Center and that the Town followed their recommendations.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye

**Non-CIC Articles:**

- **Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School - \$59,000**
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend appropriating \$59,000 for tuition and transportation for a Montague resident attending the Smith Vocational Technical High School, to be raised from the unexpended balance of Article #11 of the May 7, 2025 Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Wisnewski seconded the motion.
  - Ms. Rae questioned why last year’s article was not spent. Ms. Desroches reported that the student who was a freshman did not return. Ms. Bell-Upp discussed that there is a legal obligation to pay for students to attend Smith Vocational if the Franklin County Tech School does not offer the program. Mr. Menegoni questioned what vocation the student was enrolled in and questioned the cost of the transportation. Ms. Desroches reported that there is no known knowledge of what vocation the student is enrolling in. Mr. Ramsey reported that the daily transportation rate is based off the bids done last year and that it is the market rate.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Abstain, Wisnewski – Aye

- **Reseal Unity Skate Park for \$5,500**
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$5,500 to reseal the skate park at Unity Park, said sum to be raised from the unexpended balance of Article #24 of the May 6, 2023 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Bell seconded the motion.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye
- **Montague Center Park Improvements \$7,326**
  - Ms. Wisnewski moved to recommend \$7,326 for the usage of Montague Center Park improvements, said sum to be raised from the unexpended balance of Article #8 of the October 20, 2023 Special Town Meeting. Mr. Menegoni seconded the motion.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye
- **Carnegie Library Repairs \$16,500**
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$16,500 for Carnegie Library repairs, with \$12,950 to be raised from the unexpended balance of Article #25 of the May 4, 2019 Annual Town Meeting and \$3,550 to be raised from free cash. Ms. Rae seconded the motion.
  - Ms. Wisnewski wondered whether this article was part of the new library or just a quick fix to the old. Mr. Ramsey discussed that there were recommended some minor roof repairs and now the library has bats coming in. The repairs are to patch up holes the bats are coming and the other recommended work. Even if there is a new library built this building will still be Town property for a few years until the new use is determined.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye
- **Police Equipment \$13,200**
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$13,200 for police equipment, said sum to be raised from free cash. Mr. Bell seconded the motion.
  - Mr. Menegoni questioned what the cost of the refrigerator was, and Ms. Desroches answered that the quote was for \$8,000.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye
- **Generator Redesign Funding \$23,705.08**
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$23,705.08 for the funding of a generator redesign deficit, with \$3,030.48 to be raised from the unexpended balance of Article #14 of the May 7, 2025 Annual Town Meeting and \$20,674.60 to be raised from Sewer Retained Earnings. Mr. Bell seconded the motion.
  - Ms. Wisnewski requested to see the request since it was not sent in the original paperwork. Ms. Desroches shared the request and reported that it is the main generator project of the Clean Water Facility that went over budget due to redesign issues at the beginning of the project. Mr. Ramsey reported that normally projects would be funded with reserve fund or the bid overrun account but that since this is a enterprise fund these funding sources are not available.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye
- **Airport FY26 Operating Budget \$8,144**
  - Ms. Rae moved to recommend \$8,144 to increase Airport FY26 operating budget, with said sum to be raised from Airport Retained Earnings. Mr. Menegoni seconded the motion.
  - Ms. Rae stated that this again supports her opinion that the Airport needs more discretionary funding to help with the unexpected costs. Ms. Bell-Upp agreed with Ms. Rae and wondered if we could use the space in the budget that came from the health insurance coming in at a lower rate. Ms. Desroches reported that there is still more in

the process of the health insurance that can include a mitigation portion to compensate the employees for the plan changes.

- Bell-Upp – Aye, Bell – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye

- **Transfers to Reserves - \$89,489**

- Ms. Desroches recommended tabling this conversation for a future meeting. This would allow the article to include free cash portions of the reserve fund transfers. Discussed having this article voted after the capital articles are voted so the amount of free cash is more concrete. Ms. Rae discussed the OPEB fund and what is the appropriate amount to put in the fund. Discussed that the amount contributed has been variable throughout the years but that the Town has been trying to not fall behind in funding this liability. Ms. Desroches stated that OPEB is the calculated liability of what the entire cost of health insurance benefits would cost the Town considering all current active and retired members. This is annually calculated by an actuary and is part of the annual audit. Ms. Wisnewski and Mr. Menegoni both stated that there is not a set amount but that the previous Accountant recommended putting in a consistent amount each year to keep the Town financially sound and improve bond ratings.

### **Topics not anticipated**

- Mr. Ramsey reported that there is another non-capital article coming from the school. It will be primarily repurposing Cannabis Impact Fee money to the purchasing of curriculum materials and funding the afterschool program next year.
- Mr. Ramsey gave an update that the Selectboard will be voting Monday to start the Insurance Advisory Commission to discuss the plan changes. He also reported that the Town is still actively exploring other options for health insurance in the future as well.

### **Next Meeting dates/topics:**

- March 11 – CIC/FC/SB Capital requests, CIC report, and votes
- March 18 – SB/FC reconciliation and vote remaining articles
- March 25 – FC final votes
- April 1 – Review backgrounds and begin FC report
- April 8 – FC report finalized
- April 29 – FC Annual Town Meeting prep
- May 2 – Annual Town Meeting

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Rae makes the motion to adjourn at 6:51 PM. Seconded by Mr. Bell and approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Angelica Desroches

### **Documents and exhibits:**