

MEETING OF MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE, SELECTBOARD, and CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 6 PM

This meeting was held via zoom and recorded:

<https://vimeo.com/982262386>

Selectboard Chair Matt Lord called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Capital Improvement Chair Greg Garrison called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Finance Committee Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Finance Committee members present: Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp, Chris Menegoni, Franca Wisnewski, Emily Siegenthaler

Finance Committee members absent: Leigh Rae, Josh Bell, Stuart Mieber

Selectboard members present: Matt Lord, Marina Goldman

Selectboard members absent: Rick Kuklewicz

Capital Improvement Committee members present: Greg Garrison, Ariel Elan, Chris Menegoni

Capital Improvement Committee members absent: Jason Burbank, Lynn Reynolds

Others present: Town Accountant Angelica Desroches, Assistant Town Administrator Christopher Nolan-Zeller, Interim Moderator Lizbeth Irving

The meeting was recorded by MCTV.

Capital Improvement Committee articles

- **Upfit Airport F450 - \$26,000**
 - Mr. Garrison reported that the Airport is requesting to upfit a F-450 that they currently own instead of purchasing a new truck. The argument being that this should extend the vehicles' life and fits what they need currently.
- **Industrial Blvd Path and Pioneer Renovation - \$142,500**
 - With grant money that is available for airports there is an ask to build a pathway that extends from the FRTA bus stop all the way to FCTS. This will provide a bike path to the Airport. The plan is to also do ADA updates to the Pioneer Aviation bathroom. The Town needs to match \$142,500 to leverage the \$2.8 million grant from the Federal Aviation Airport Terminal Program.
 - Mr. Lord inquired whether there were conversations with the other property owners that this path would go through. Mr. Garrison replied that they were approached about the project and that they were amenable to the project.
 - Ms. Elan shared that this path would help with appealing to the people visiting the airport and will help them with their transport into Town.
 - Ms. Bell-Upp requested clarification of using the Cannabis Fees for funding the project and if there needs to be approval of using it. Mr. Lord responded that 253 Organic signed a release stating that the funds belong to the Town and they don't want them back. He also added that there is case law stating that these funds can be spent. There is still some question as to what the state response to using the money is.
- **DPW Discretionary Account - \$30,785**

- Mr. Garrison discussed that this is an annual request to replenish the DPW discretionary account to \$75,000. This fund is used for emergency purchases and repairs, which requires Selectboard approval if spending over \$25,000.
- **DPW Roller - \$35,000**
 - With the new DPW building the department has been able to extend the life of vehicles and often don't need to be replaced after 10 years but can go 15 years or more now.
 - The roller is used for the paving projects that the department does in-house for paving alleys and parking lots.
- **DPW Pickup - \$80,000**
 - This pickup will replace a current pickup and will be used for maintenance work around Town. During the winter it will be equipped with snow removal equipment.
- **Large Used Excavator - \$150,000**
 - DPW request was for a used excavator instead of a new excavator to save money but still meet the needs of the department. Mr. Garrison described that the DPW is starting to do more projects in-house instead of hiring out the work.
 - Mr. Lord wondered if there were cost savings as examples as part of this ask. Mr. Garrison and Ms. Elan reported that the Ferry Road project is the biggest example of the cost savings. Mr. Lord suggested having that information presented to Town Meeting.
 - Ms. Wisnewski asked if the price of the article for the vehicles is all inclusive of all costs or just direct purchasing price. Mr. Garrison stated that they are only presenting the purchase of the vehicles and that the operating costs of the vehicles are not part of these prices.
- **DPW Tractor - \$65,000**
 - This DPW request is for replacement of small tractor that is used for sidewalk snow removal and for basic material when on the job. The current tractor is fairly rusted out and there isn't much else in repairs that they can do to the current tractor.
- **Transfer Station Security Gate - \$30,000**
 - This request is for primarily security and safety. People are getting into the transfer station after hours and they want to prevent this. Mr. Lord also added that it was a suggestion from the Franklin County Solid Waste district.
- **Alley and Non-Chapter 90 Paving - \$30,000**
 - Alley and non-chapter 90 paving is going to be an annual request to keep the Town up to date on the paving of non-chapter 90 paving. Ms. Elan stated that the plan was very systematic with the Town sectioned out so that each year they move through a section of Town. Ms. Bell-Upp inquired if this was only in Turners Falls or if it was the other villages as well. Mr. Garrison confirmed that these are in all the villages.
- **Sidewalk replacement and repair - \$15,000**
 - This is also going to be an annual request to keep the Town up to date on repairing and replacing sidewalks. Mr. Garrison discussed that they are working on getting the sidewalks into the capital plan but for now this is his annual request.
- **Police Cruisers - \$161,000**
 - There has been a shift in leadership at the Police Department and with that the new Chief has been doing a thorough analysis of equipment of the department. Mr. Garrison reported that CIC had lost eyes on the police fleet since it was rolled into the operating budget. This has resulted in the Chief coming to the Town for a request for two new

cruisers this year and possibly for the next few years until he can get the fleet back up to date. This year's request is for a new K9 cruiser and patrol cruiser.

- Ms. Bell-Upp questioned why they need to replace two cruisers a year for the next few years when the concern is a \$3,000 part that might need repair on them. Ms. Elan stated that the life span of the cruiser is usually 100,000 miles so the request for replacement is not just fear of repairs. The reason cruisers only last 100,000 miles is because they run 16 hours a day, non-stop.
- Mr. Menegoni added that he thinks the future year requests will need evaluations of what the needs of the department are at that time.
- Ms. Wisniewski expressed concern that the Town did not keep up with cruisers. She questions what the role the Town had in making sure these were kept in good standing. She also wants to know what is necessary for the department to function, especially in a year when the department has already had a significant increase due to personnel changes.
- Ms. Goldman stated that she did a tour of the station and was surprised with the status of the vehicles and reported that there could be a 9-month delay from ordering a vehicle to it being delivered that needs to be considered.
- Mr. Garrison reported again that the CIC did lose visibility on the fleet when it moved into operating budget and, in hindsight, they see that as an error that they are in the process of correcting. Mr. Lord also added that in the past year the Town skipped funding a cruiser without knowledge of their current standing and while trying to find cuts in difficult budgets.
- **Police Station HVAC Controls - \$37,100**
 - The HVAC system at the station has been having issues for a while. The contractors report that the console control is outdated and that if the HVAC control is replaced it will fix the issues without needing to replace the entire system.
- **Shea Facility and Theatrical Upgrades - \$100,000**
 - This request is to improve the sound and lighting, replace the backdrops, the addition of an accessibility stage lift, and finally for exterior upgrades and interior refreshing. This is part of a matching grant with the Mass Cultural Council Facilities Grant.
- **Colle Building Repairs - \$25,000**
 - The original request was just for tile repair and replacement. However, during the quote process the cost of the tile repair came in lower than expected. Instead of dropping the request down, the plan was to use the remaining funds to begin HVAC work that is on the capital schedule for the next few years. This is all being funded by Colle money.
- **CWF Super Duty Work Truck with Plow - \$85,000**
 - The first request of CWF is for a new work truck with plow. This will mean that they will not have to use their personal vehicles to get to the facilities. The department will utilize this truck a lot in all the work that they do.
- **Wastewater Facility Planning Study - \$125,000**
 - The department wants to do a comprehensive evaluation of the 1960s preliminary and primary treatment sections of the facility. The concern is with workplace safety issues. There are a lot of rotted cast iron piping and other issues from severe corrosion. This study will help them know what needs to be done to get the facility to a safer, more modernized operation.
- **Secondary Clarifier Mechanisms - \$966,000**

- This request is to replace a 1980s secondary clarifier mechanism. This was originally designed for the paper mill waste which was coarser and thicker. The part is now inefficient for the waste they currently treat. The largest portion of this request is for the part itself. The remaining costs are mostly for renting material and for electrical contractors. The rest of the labor is going to be done in-house by the CWF employees, which is going to save around \$1 million for the project.
- Ms. Bell-Upp inquired whether this borrowing would be split between taxation and sewer fees. Ms. Desroches reported that this project is entirely sewer borrowing and will not be charged to taxation.
- **New Library Building Project - \$23,704,053 (grant-funded portion = \$11,206,589)**
 - Mr. Nolan-Zeller updated the numbers for the grant and town portions to be \$11,286,440 to the grant and \$12,417,613 for the Town share.
 - Ms. Elan stated that at this time the Capital Improvement Committee has not formally voted on the new library building. She asked for clarification about whether it is a capital item. Ms. Desroches added that she believed it would be considered a capital item that the CIC would have knowledge of and would have been part of the plan. Mr. Nolan-Zeller reported that these large projects do have a role in the capital plan in the narrative portion of the capital plan but not necessarily in the 5-year charts. Currently there is not a formal vote from CIC.
 - Ms. Wisnewski questioned whether the library must go to vote. Ms. Desroches reported a debt exclusion must pass a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting and then a majority vote in a general election.

Next Meeting dates/topics:

- 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. Elan makes a motion to adjourn at 7:09 PM. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni and approved.
Elan – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Garrison – Aye

Mr. Lord makes a motion to adjourn at 7:09 PM. Seconded by Ms. Goldman and approved.
Lord – Aye, Goldman – Aye

Mr. Menegoni makes the motion to adjourn at 7:10 PM. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits: