

MEETING OF MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE and SELECTBOARD

Wednesday, March 18, 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.

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

Finance Committee members present: Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp, Chris Menegoni, Francia Wisnewski, Emily Siegenthaler, Leigh Rae, Josh Bell

Finance Committee members absent: Stuart Miehler

Selectboard members present: Matt Lord, Marina Goldman, Rich Kuklewicz

Others present: Town Accountant Angelica Desroches, Town Administrator Walter Ramsey, Assistant Town Administrator Christopher Nolan-Zeller, Police Chief Jason Haskins

The meeting was recorded by MCTV.

Capital article votes

- **Upfit Airport F450 - \$26,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$26,000 to upfit the Airport's F450, with \$5,000 to be raised from the unexpended balance of Article #25 from the May 6, 2017 Annual Town Meeting and \$21,000 to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$26,000 to upfit the Airport's F450. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
 - Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **Industrial Blvd Path and Pioneer Renovation - \$142,500**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$142,500 as a grant match to build a multi-use path at Industrial Blvd and renovate the Pioneer Aviation, with said sum to be raised from the Cannabis Impact Stabilization. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Ms. Bell-Upp questioned how the grant feels about mixing the path with the bathroom upgrades. Ms. Rae also questioned how much of the grant was for the path and how much it was for the bathroom. She also inquired if the Town has approached any of the other property owners to help match the grant as well. Mr. Ramsey reported that they have not approached the other property owners to see if they would help match the grant. He discussed that it is a good usage of the Cannabis Impact money because it will basically connect the two Cannabis facilities in Montague. They also discussed that the building would need other repairs along with the bathroom and that the renovation portion is \$600,000.
 - Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$142,500 as a grant match to build a multi-use path at Industrial Blvd and renovate Pioneer Aviation. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
 - Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **DPW Discretionary Account - \$30,785**

- Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$30,785 for the DPW Discretionary Account, to be raised from free cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
- Ms. Rae wanted to know how the number for the DPW discretionary was settled at \$75,000 when a 2% discretionary would be around \$50,000 to \$60,000. She also was curious how DPW uses all the of the other R&M lines that are in their budget and whether they need such a high discretionary. Mr. Nolan-Zeller stated that historically it was held at a \$100,000 level and that in the last two years they have lowered it to \$75,000. Mr. Kuklewicz mentioned that any purchase over \$25,000 must be approved by the Selectboard. Ms. Wisnewski added that it is the policy of the town and that maybe it needs to be reviewed again in the next yearly policy review.
- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$30,785 to bring DPW discretionary to \$75,000 for FY27. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **DPW Roller - \$35,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$35,000 to purchase and equip a new roller, with \$2,615.68 to be raised from unexpended balance from Article #12 of the May 4, 2024 Annual Town Meeting and \$32,384.32 to be raised from free cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$35,000 to purchase and equip a new roller. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
 - Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **DPW Pickup - \$80,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$80,000 to purchase and equip a new pickup, with \$23,633.18 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #13 of the March 14, 2024 Special Town Meeting and \$56,366.82 to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Ms. Rae asked whether the DPW really needs another pickup truck and why it was so much more money than last year’s request. Mr. Nolan-Zeller reported that last year they bought a smaller pickup and that this replacement is following the 12-year replacement schedule. Mr. Lord reported that he agrees with having set time frame for replacement and that after the winter we just had it shows the need for these trucks. Ms. Bell-Upp inquired about what happens to surplus trucks. Mr. Nolan-Zeller responded that they are auctioned off and the revenues go back to the general fund. Discussed making sure there is more information in the backup of the report for town meeting.
 - Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$80,000 to purchase and equip a new pickup. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
 - Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **Large Used Excavator - \$150,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$150,000 to purchase and equip a large used excavator, with \$125,308.25 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #15 of the May 4, 2024 Annual Town Meeting and \$24,691.75 to be raised from to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.

- Ms. Wisnewski wondered if this was a replacement or a new vehicle for the department. Mr. Menegoni answered that it is an addition to the fleet because right now they share one with the Airport.
- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$150,000 to purchase and equip a large used excavator. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **DPW Tractor - \$65,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$65,000 to purchase and equip a tractor, with \$23,334.34 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #20D of the May 7, 2022 Annual Town Meeting and \$41,665.66 to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$65,000 to purchase and equip a tractor. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
 - Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **Transfer Station Security Gate - \$30,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$30,000 for the purchase of a new transfer station security gate, with \$2,505 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #23 of the May 7, 2016 Annual Town Meeting and \$27,495 to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$30,000 for the purchase of a new transfer station security gate. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
 - Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **Alley and Non-Chapter 90 Paving - \$30,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$30,000 for alley and non-chapter 90 paving, with \$2,035 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #26 of the May 6, 2017 Annual Town Meeting and \$27,965 to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$30,000 for alley and non-chapter 90 paving. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
 - Ms. Rae wanted to know if this article and the next one are considered capital or if they are going to be done yearly would they be operating. Ms. Bell-Upp said that CIC is looking to make a plan for the sidewalks and the alleys but for now this is a placeholder to keep it caught up. Mr. Nolan-Zeller added that these articles are not necessarily permanent.
 - Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **Sidewalk replacement and repair - \$15,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$15,000 for sidewalk replacement and repair, with \$2,450 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #26 from the May 4, 2019 Annual Town Meeting and \$12,550 to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Rae.
 - Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$15,000 for sidewalk replacement and repair. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.

- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **Police Cruisers - \$161,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$161,000 to purchase and equip police cruisers, with \$19,060 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #15 from the June 13, 2020 Annual Town Meeting and \$141,940 to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Mr. Menegoni asked when they would be delivered. Mr. Haskins stated that they can't order until July 1 and it would take 8 to 10 months after that for delivery. Ms. Wisnewski expressed concern with approving the article with the information she had. She wanted to know how many cruisers there are, mileage for them, and how the cars are assigned. Mr. Haskins stated that there are 15 vehicles with two set as contracted cars for the Chief and the Lieutenant. Three cars are for the detectives and there are seven cruisers. Five of the cars ended up being 2017s due to two cruisers being purchased through Town Meeting, one was an insurance replacement, one was K9 gifts funded, and the last one was ordered in 2018 but they received a 2017. All seven cruisers have over 150,000 miles on them. The cars need a lot of repairs. There are often cars that are being used for training and details. Each car is assigned to be operational for two 8-hour shifts, and they are supposed to have one shift off as down time for the engine. Mr. Kuklewicz added that he thinks the Town should anticipate that there will be a cruiser replaced every year and that he would like to see it back in the operating budget next year. Mr. Lord admitted in hindsight that skipping a cruiser last year was not a good idea, which is why he is supporting two cruisers this year. They all discussed having CIC have more eyes on the cruisers and that it would give more authenticity to the need. Mr. Menegoni inquired if there is a way to reduce the 16 hours of idling time and the Chief reported that they do try to turn them off as much as possible and that hybrids reduce this idle time because they turn off when stopped. They also discussed that the oldest cars often are assigned to the SROs since they do the least amount of driving.
- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$161,000 to purchase and equip two police cruisers. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **Police Station HVAC Controls - \$37,100**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$37,100 for the repair and improvements to the police station HVAC system, with \$13,100 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #28 of the May 6, 2023 Annual Town Meeting and \$24,000 to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Ms. Rae.
- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$37,100 for the repair and improvements to the police station HVAC system. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye, Lord – Aye
- **Shea Facility and Theatrical Upgrades - \$100,000**
 - Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$100,000 for improvements to the Shea facility and upgrades to the theater, with \$19,000 to be raised from the unexpended balance from Article #15 of the May 4, 2019 and \$81,000 to be raised from free cash. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
 - Ms. Rae inquired if this was a 50% match. Mr. Nolan-Zeller responded affirmatively. He also added that the project would be specifically toward infrastructure that is town

owned parts of the building and not the private property of the Shea Theater Arts Center.

- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Mr. Lord moved to recommend \$100,000 for improvements to the Shea facility and upgrades to the theater. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Abstain, Lord – Aye

Mr. Lord leaves meeting at 7:24 PM.

- **Colle Building Repairs - \$25,000**

- Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$25,000 for the replacement and repair of tile and HVAC in the Colle Building, with said sum to be raised from the Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.

- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$25,000 for the replacement and repair of tile and HVAC in the Colle Building. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye

- **CWF Super Duty Work Truck with Plow - \$85,000**

- Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$85,000 for purchase and equipping of a new pickup with plow, with said sum to be raised from Sewer Retained Earnings. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.

- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$85,000 for purchase and equipping of a new pickup with plow. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye

- **Wastewater Facility Planning Study - \$125,000**

- Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$125,000 for the Wastewater Facility Planning study, with \$125,000 to be raised from Sewer Retained Earnings. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.

- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$125,000 for the Wastewater Facility Planning study. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye

- **Secondary Clarifier Mechanisms - \$966,000**

- Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$966,000 to purchase secondary clarifier mechanisms, said sum to be raised from borrowing. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.

- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye
 - Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$966,000 to purchase secondary clarifier mechanisms. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye

- **New Library Building Project - \$23,704,053 (grant-funded portion = \$11,206,589)**

- Mr. Menegoni moved to recommend \$23,704,053 for the planning, designing, engineering and construction of a new library, said sum to be raised from borrowing. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.

- Ms. Rae asked why the full amount is being appropriated, which is due to the grant requirement. Mr. Kuklewicz inquired if this is the debt exclusion article request which was confirmed.
- Wisnewski – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Menegoni- Aye, Bell – Aye, Bell-Upp – Aye

- Ms. Goldman moved to recommend \$23,704,053 for the planning, designing, engineering and construction of a new library. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz.
- Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye

Ms. Wisnewski left the meeting at 7:46PM.

Reconcile Selectboard and Finance Committee Budget Recommendations

- Ms. Bell-Upp started the conversation by discussing that she wanted to revisit the Police Department budget. Ms. Wisnewski inquired whether the wages were negotiated with the union and with the wage and class as a reference. The wages are all based on current union negotiated contracts except the Chief who was a separately negotiated contract when he was hired. Ms. Bell-Upp highlighted looking at the part-time line and overtime line now that he is fully staffed. Mr. Haskins stated that the part-time line is used to cover vacations and to supplement staffing during busier times of year. The overtime line was not cut because as wages increase so does the cost of overtime. Also there is a newly negotiated cap on comp time which might mean that the town will have to pay out comp time to get some of the police officers below that cap. Ms. Bell-Upp and Mr. Haskins discussed cutting the academy line in half so that there is still room for one person to go to academy but not two. This was an agreed upon cut for all parties.

FY27 Operating Budgets discussion and recommendations

- These articles were continued to the next meeting on March 25, 2026.

Remaining ATM Special Article Recommendations

- Appropriations to reserves
 - Following the approval of the capital articles there is \$297,592 left in free cash. The Finance Committee discussed using \$250,000 to put into reserves for future. Mr. Kuklewicz mentioned putting some money away into the Franklin Tech Stabilization because this year we have used a lot of this stabilization to cover the assessment. The consensus was to put \$50,000 into OPEB, \$100,000 into Capital Stabilization, \$50,000 to GMRSD Stabilization, and \$50,000 into the Franklin Tech Stabilization. This article will be prepared for vote next week.

Topics not anticipated in 48 hours

- The school submitted an article request to repurpose previous articles that used Cannabis Impact Fee money. These articles were to fund the afterschool program and purchase instructional materials for the different schools. This provides support for the school for this year without impacting the Gill assessment.
- Arts and Culture article was brought forth to the Finance Committee. The primary concern being who is responsible for distributing the money. There were concerns with having another committee in the Town to establish and manage. The idea was brought up on whether fundraising might be a better option through a “Friends of” organization. Questions about how it could be managed differently within the municipal finance world were brought up without any clear better options for this plan.

Next Meeting dates/topics:

- March 25 – FC final votes and FC report
- 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. Goldman makes a motion to adjourn at 8:06 PM. Seconded by Mr. Kuklewicz and approved.
Kuklewicz – Aye, Goldman – Aye

Mr. Menegoni makes the motion to adjourn at 8:07 PM. Seconded by Ms. Rae and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Bell – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits: