

MEETING OF MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 8, 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 6:02 PM.

Finance Committee members present: Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp, Leigh Rae, Stuart Miehler, Emily Siegenthaler,

Finance Committee members absent: Josh Bell, Francia Wisnewski, Chris Menegoni

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

The meeting was recorded by MCTV.

Meeting minutes:

- Ms. Rae moved to approve the minutes of April 1, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Miehler and approved.
 - Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler —Aye, Miehler – Aye, Rae – Aye

Review/Vote Final Draft of Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting

- Ms. Rae had a few adjustments with one being a fix of numbers. She also wanted more clarification around why the Pioneer debt funding was from sale of real estate. Mr. Ramsey reported that a large portion of the money in the sale of real estate fund was from selling pieces of land in the Airport Industrial Park. Re-worded the sentence to show that this is a continuation of funding that has happened several years in a row.
- Mr. Miehler wanted to add clarification about the split tax rate. Also, it was pointed out that the infrastructure fix from last week went too optimistic in this draft. The group discussed that while there are still ongoing issues progress has been made, but there is still more to go. They wanted to highlight that some fixes are on the 5-year capital plan but that there is some infrastructure that is not on that plan yet.
- Ms. Rae makes a motion to approve the Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting as presented pending any small adjustments that are sent to Town Accountant. Ms. Siegenthaler seconded the motion.
 - Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler —Aye, Miehler – Aye, Rae – Aye

Updates from Town Administrator

- Mr. Ramsey presented to the Finance Committee the additional information on the library and new Tech School project finances that were created to be part of the Town Meeting packets. The information presented was on the cost of the projects, the voting guidelines, debt exclusion definitions, and information about the Town's debt capacity.
- Mr. Miehler and Ms. Bell-Upp inquired about how the FCTS project will be bonded and how it impacts the individual towns. Mr. Miehler specifically wanted to know what happens when one of the other towns refuses to pay their share. Mr. Ramsey stated he would follow up and get those answers for the Finance Committee.

- There was discussion around the chart that shows the debt in comparison to Town expenses overall and how far the projection goes. Finance Committee stated it was useful information but maybe to present fewer years in the future.
- Mr. Mieher suggested removing the Levy Ceiling from the debt exclusion chart as it might be too much information that distracts the voters from the information that is being conveyed.
- Ms. Rae and Mr. Mieher both commented that the information was very useful and that it seemed neutral.
- Ms. Bell-Upp and Mr. Ramsey discussed the future elementary school project and that the timeline for that project is so far out that it is impossible to predict numbers at this time. Mr. Mieher requested more information about the project and Mr. Ramsey reported he would forward the MSBA application which should have the information he is seeking.

Topics not anticipated in 48 hours

- Ms. Irving brought to the Finance Committee concern about how to keep the discussion at the Annual Town Meeting specific to the four corners of the warrant. Specifically with concern about the FCTS and the Library projects. The Library is the only project being voted on the warrant so there is concern that the conversation will have some difficulty in staying focused. Ms. Bell-Upp stated that after the pre-town meeting there might be more understanding of what people will be asking. Ms. Rae also added that this meeting is to vote on one project and to remind the voters that there will be another vote later for the other project.

Next Meeting dates/topics:

- April 28 – Pre-Town Meeting
- April 29 – FC Annual Town Meeting Prep
- May 2 – Annual Town Meeting
- June ? – Reserve Fund Transfers and End of Year Transfers

Adjournment

Mr. Mieher makes the motion to adjourn at 7:12 PM. Seconded by Ms. Rae and approved.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler – Aye, Rae – Aye, Mieher – Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits: