

**MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, July 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM**

This meeting will be held remotely.  
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**Meeting Being Recorded**

**Votes May Be Taken**

*Recordings are archived at <https://vimeo.com/mctvchannel17/videos>*

1. 6:00 Call to order for all, including announcing that the meeting is being recorded, roll call, welcome to visitors, and guidelines for participation.
2. 6:02 Reorganization
3. 6:05 Review of meeting minutes of June 10, 2026
4. 6:07 Reserve Fund Transfer
  - a. Solid Waste Budget – \$19,300
5. 6:15 Stipend Fall Review – Begin Survey/Review Process
6. 6:25 Updates from Town Administrator
7. 6:30 Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting.
8. 6:31 Next Meeting dates/topics
  - a. August ? – 5 Year Capital Plan
  - b. September ? – Financial Policy review
  - c. October ? – Stipend Review
9. 6:35 Adjourn

**MEETING OF MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, June 10, 2026 at 6 PM**  
**This meeting was held in person at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376**

Finance Committee Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

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

**Finance Committee members absent:** Josh Bell, Stuart Miehler

**Others present:** Town Accountant Angelica Desroches

The meeting was recorded by MCTV.

**Meeting minutes:**

- Ms. Rae moved to approve the minutes of April 29, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni and approved.
  - Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler —Aye, Rae – Aye, Wisnewski – Abstain, Menegoni – Aye

**Reserve Fund Transfers**

- Recreation Department - \$6,200
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to approve \$5,600 to account number 001-630-5242 Parks and Recreation Facilities and Grounds and authorize the chair to sign. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
  - Reserve fund transfer to cover whale sprinkler unit repairs and the sun shelter replacement after unexpected storm damage.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler —Aye, Rae – Aye, Wisnewski – Abstain, Menegoni – Aye
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to approve \$600 to account number 001-630-5342 Parks and Recreation Internet and authorize the chair to sign. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler —Aye, Rae – Aye, Wisnewski – Abstain, Menegoni – Aye
- Snow and Ice - \$15,200
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to approve \$15,200 to account number 001-423-5532 DPW Snow and Ice and authorize the chair to sign. Seconded by Ms. Wisnewski.
  - Discussed the current bill that is going through the state to allocate funds for snow and ice deficits. With the bill still being in the approval stage Ms. Desroches recommended cleaning up the deficit for this year.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler —Aye, Rae – Aye, Wisnewski – Abstain, Menegoni – Aye
- EV Charging Station - \$2,000
  - Ms. Wisnewski moved to approve \$2,000 to account number 001-480-5211 Charging Station Electricity and authorize the chair to sign. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler —Aye, Rae – Aye, Wisnewski – Abstain, Menegoni – Aye
- Property and Liability Insurance - \$7,300
  - Mr. Menegoni moved to approve \$7,300 to account number 001-946-5740 Property and Liability Insurance and authorize the chair to sign.
  - Discussed that this overage was due to extra deductibles that came in unexpectedly this year.
    - Bell-Upp – Aye, Siegenthaler —Aye, Rae – Aye, Wisnewski – Abstain, Menegoni – Aye

## **Debrief of ATM and Budget Process**

- Mr. Menegoni stated that he would like to see the Finance Committee and Selectboard votes at the end of the year be broken out by the segments of government instead of as one whole operating budget number.
- Ms. Wisnewki discussed that there should be more of a process of onboarding the Finance Committee members. She also mentioned that the committee should have more engagement with the community and work on different approaches to that. Ms. Siegenthaler added that during her onboarding she did get a lot of resources but is interested in more. Ms. Wisnewski discussed the Association of Town Finance Committees.
- Ms. Wisnewski last concept is that the Finance Committee should be paid a stipend because there is a lot of time commitment.
- Ms. Rae wanted to organize meetings with several department heads during the summer so that the Finance Committee, Selectboard, and CIC could all go do a tour of facilities.
- The group discussed how to increase public engagement. Discussed different forums by joining Selectboard office hours, using the paper, and encouraging people to come to meetings.

## **Discuss Summer Schedule and Plans**

- 5-year forecast
  - Discussed updating the 5 year forecast for the Finance Committee to review in the later summer. Also with more guidelines on what is needed from the Finance Committee in creating that forecast.
- FCTS budget strategy
  - Budget strategy needs to be updated given that the technical school is changing enrollment to a lottery system. This is not a formal policy but an internal policy of the Finance Committee.
- DPW/CWF budget lines
  - Both departments are working on revamping budget lines so that it is more clear which lines are needed. Want to line up the budgets so that there are fewer deficit line items. Instead of having the departments come in to meet with the Finance Committee have them revamp the lines in advance and bring to the Finance Committee during the budget season.

## **Topics not anticipated in 48 hours**

- Brief discussion on the biggest budget concerns looking at FY28. Highlighted insurance costs, personnel costs, and unknown capital costs.

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

- August ? – 5 year forecast

## **Adjournment**

Ms. Rae makes the motion to adjourn at 7:12 PM. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni and approved.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Angelica Desroches

## **Documents and exhibits:**



REQUEST FOR TRANSFER FROM THE RESERVE FUND

Request is hereby made for the following transfer from the Reserve Fund in accordance with Chapter 40, Section 6 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

1. Amount requested: \$ 19,300
2. To be transferred to account number 001-433-5280-000000  
Account Title Solid Waste Removal
3. Present balance in said line-item appropriation: \$-121,912.10 \_\_\_\_\_

The amount requested will be used for (give specific purpose):

To cover budget overage due to increased waste compared to previous years and previous budgets.

This expenditure is extraordinary and/or unforeseen for the following reasons:

This year the Town is throwing away more trash than in previous fiscal years, which is causing an increase in the tipping fee costs.

Samuel Urkiel

Date: 7/9/26

\_\_\_\_\_  
Officer/Department Head

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ACTION OF OVERSIGHT BOARD

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Number present & voting: \_\_\_\_\_

Transfer recommended in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Transfer disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Number present & voting: \_\_\_\_\_

Transfer voted in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Transfer disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Finance Committee

## **Finance Committee Review of Stipends and Recommendations for FY25**

During FY2018 the Finance Committee did a thorough evaluation of all stipends for effect in Fiscal Year 2019, with the intention of reviewing the stipend values for FY2025 in FY2023. The focus would be to account for changes in the position requirements and to adjust for inflation. We also decided that five years was too long to wait before a review, and that the new stipends should be reviewed after three years.

All 25 stipend recipients were asked via email to explain any changes in their duties since 2019. Three weeks after sending the email, only 7 responses have been received (from a total of 5 individuals), and of the responses received, the most apparent change was inflation/cost of gas for inspections.

### **APPROACH TO STIPEND REVIEW**

Some of the considerations include:

- It can reasonably be accepted that stipends for board positions and additional duties are token amounts that should still be reasonably adjusted for inflation
- It can reasonably be accepted that stipends for work such as inspections should adequately compensate the employee for the time and gas spent on such work
- It is in the Town's best interest to provide adequate compensation for both inspection work and additional duties outside of the main job description to attract qualified applicants
- It is also in the Town's best interest to provide sufficient token payments for board members to both attract residents to those roles and to reimburse residents at least partially for additional costs incurred in filling those roles, without which they would not be able to participate in governing
- All stipends should be round dollar amounts and stipends paid monthly should be evenly divisible by 12
- Those stipends already increased at the 2023 ATM and new positions would not require an adjustment at this time. (Moderator, Board of Registrars, Farmers Market Manager, Hearing Officer)

The remaining stipends were categorized as either direct pay for work (inspector stipends, tree warden, IT positions) or tokens (board stipends).

The increase in inspector stipends was somewhat arbitrary but was intended to provide more professional compensation for professional work and to recognize transportation costs.

After considering several perspectives on how to determine an overall increase to account for inflation we selected 12% as the standard increase.

## TREATMENT OF SPECIFIC POSITIONS

The Forest Warden position and workload was somewhat unclear, but it seemed high in comparison to what were thought to be comparable positions, so it was first slightly reduced and then increased by 12% so that there would still be an increase in the stipend, but it would be less out of line.

The Tree Warden, Emergency Management Director and Town IT Coordinator stipends were increased 12 % and then adjusted to an even dollar amount that would be evenly divisible for 12 monthly payments.

The Police IT Administrator stipend was increased to the \$6,000 requested by the Selectboard after discussion of and agreement with their rationale.

The Animal and Barn Inspector positions had the most research and discussion. Job descriptions and annual estimates of time spent were reviewed. The Barn Inspector's estimated workload was valued at 62 hours @\$20 (higher than current minimum wage and allowing for mileage costs). This would be \$1,240 which was then increased by 12 and rounded to \$1,400. For the Animal Inspector, the current compensation was deemed adequate for the average annual hours, so it was just increased by 12% to \$1,764.

## BOARD STIPENDS

For board stipends, the Finance Committee reviewed the original structure:

1. Start with the Selectboard member stipend
2. Provide 75% of that amount to members of the Board of Assessors and Board of Health, and then
3. Provide a 10% differential for committee chairs.

There was no interest in adjusting those proportions, so the Selectboard member stipend was increased by 12% and the other calculations followed and were adjusted to be even dollar amount evenly divisible for 12 monthly payments.

Finally, the hourly ranges of Schedule II were considered, even though they are not technically stipends. It was decided to increase the top of each range by \$2 to account for inflation and to provide more flexibility to departments.