

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 6:00 PM

This meeting will be held remotely.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86523275284>

Meeting ID: 865 2327 5284

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,85916016153# US (Chicago)

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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, including announcing that the meeting is being recorded, roll call, welcome to visitors, and guidelines for participation.
2. 6:01 Review of meeting minutes of January 8, 2025
3. 6:05 FY2026 Cemetery Budget
4. 6:20 FY2026 COA Budget
5. 6:35 FY2026 Airport Budget and Funding Options
6. 6:50 Recommendations for STM financial articles
 - a. \$24,000 Airport Reserve Fund transfer
7. 7:00 Updates from Town Administrator
8. 7:15 Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting
9. 7:17 Next meeting dates
 - a. 1/22/25 – 5:30 start time Library, CWF, STM Articles
 - b. 2/5/25 – Meeting with Selectboard and the School
10. 7:20 Adjourn

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 6:00 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, Vice Chair Fred Bowman, Clerk Chris Menegoni and member John Hanold

Finance Committee members absent: Jennifer Waryas, Francia Wisniewski

Others present: Town Administrator Walter Ramsey, Assistant Town Administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller and Town Accountant Angelica Desroches, MCTV Dean Garvin

The meeting was recorded by MCTV as well as by Angelica Desroches

Meeting minutes:

Mr. Hanold moved to approve the minutes of December 11, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye

Review and Recommendations for STM financial articles

- Article 1:
 - Ms. Bell-Upp **MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$36,000 for the purpose of supplementing the FY25 Reserve Fund Budget, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Bowman.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye
- Article 2:
 - Ms. Bell-Upp **MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$12,500 for the purpose of purchasing and installing cable-related equipment for MCTV and anything incidental or related thereto, said sum to be raised from PEG Access Funds. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni.
 - Mr. Hanold noted that this is a routine article that happens every year to move money to MCTV.
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye
- Article 3:
 - Ms. Bell-Upp **MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$20,547 for the purpose of increasing the amount appropriated pursuant to Article #13 of the May 4, 2024, Annual Town Meeting, which provided funding for the tuition and transportation for a Smith Vocational Montague student, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Hanold.
 - Mr. Hanold wondered why the transportation costs were higher this year. Mr. Ramsey reported that it was bid out by the school and that they did

not choose the lowest bidder because they were not vetted by the school. When the Town discovered that the rate was \$400 a day after the second month of school it was put out to rebid. After the rebid, the current company lowered the rate to \$200 a day to keep the contract. Ms. Bell-Upp shared that in the past Montague teamed with Greenfield for this transportation. Mr. Ramsey stated that unfortunately that was not available this year. Mr. Hanold would like someone to follow up to make sure that the student is using the service to which Mr. Ramsey agreed he would follow up on that.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye

- Article 4:

- Ms. Bell-Upp **MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$24,751.20 for the purpose of increasing the amount appropriated pursuant to Article #18C of the May 22, 2021, Annual Town Meeting, which provided funds for bid and project overruns, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Bowman.
 - Mr. Ramsey provided background for the article stating that the Selectboard had to utilize this special article two times this fiscal year. The first time was for the Clean Water Facility generator bid and the second time was for the 11th Street Bridge repair bid.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye

- Article 5:

- Ms. Bell-Upp **MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$48,500 for the purpose of conducting a conference room and breakroom renovation in the Clean Water Facility, including any and all incidental and related costs, with \$20,000 to be raised from the unexpended balance of Article #7 of the October 29, 2014 Special Town Meeting and \$1,218.40 to be raised from the unexpended balance of Article #15 of the March 2, 2023 Special Town Meeting and \$27,281.60 to be raised from CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Bowman.
 - Mr. Hanold was curious if there was a possibility of dual use space. Does it have to be separate spaces. He also shared that he has been to the Clean Water Facility many times over the past years and feels that the upgrade to the area would definitely be beneficial to them. Mr. Menegoni said that the work is going to be done in-house for the most part and that the presentation at the CIC showed two very functional spaces. The Clean Water Facility has been having difficulty finding meeting space for the project and compliance meetings they often end up having with providers. Mr. Nolan-Zeller reported to the board that the CIC voted unanimously to recommend the project for the STM. And that this is the only capital article for the STM, the rest of the capital articles will be for the ATM.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye

- Article 6:

- Ms. Bell-Upp **MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$24,000 for the purpose of supplementing the FY25 operating budget, with \$7,000 going to Airport PT Intern, \$13,000 to the Airport Build and Grounds, and \$4,000 to the Airport Equipment Repair and Maintenance accounts, said sum to be raised from Airport Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Bowman
 - Mr. Hanold shared concerns with this request that the Airport is budgeting too close to the margins to get the budget approved at the ATM. Mr. Ramsey reported that the Airport Commission is aware of all the overages and approved the overspending of the account lines with the understanding they were going to backfill with the retained earnings at the STM. Mr. Bowman stated that the lack of finding a qualified intern seems to be more of an issue with the school than it does with the Airport planning. Mr. Menegoni questioned whether using the retained earnings now would just keep pushing the underfunding and overspending problem to the future. Ms. Bell-Upp asked Mr. Ramsey what the results of the wage and class study were and how they impact the Airport. Mr. Ramsey answered that the wage and class recommended bringing the Airport Operations Manager downgraded a grade and the Airport Manager be moved up two grades. He also shared that the current budget does not have the wage and class changes budgeted in them yet, but that the wage and class have been the steppingstone used in negotiations. Given the wage and class study changes the Selectboard will be meeting with the Airport Manager Monday night to discuss the STM articles, wages, and the FY26 budget. Ms. Bell-Upp questioned whether the Finance Committee should wait until next week to vote on this Article with the Airport Manager attending so they can ask him questions directly. Mr. Menegoni and Mr. Hanold agreed.
 - Ms. Bell-Upp withdrew her motion.

Updates from Town Administrator

- Mr. Ramsey shared with the committee that the Selectboard will be reviewing personnel changes at the library, CWF, and COA. He also reiterated that they will be meeting with the Airport Manager on Monday night to discuss STM article and FY26 budget.
- Starting January 15th the Selectboard and Finance Committee will be shifting toward the FY26 budget. There are some unknowns currently with the health insurance increase that is currently budgeted at 5% and the sewer I&I taxation number. The complication of the implementation of the wage and class study with union negotiations is also being worked out. The current goal is to utilize a special article to fund those negotiations since they may not be completed by the ATM.
- Mr. Ramsey gave a presentation to the Finance Committee on the wage and class study results. Montague was compared to 14 communities in the commutable distance around Montague. Overall found Montague to be comparable with those communities. They also reviewed all job descriptions and redrafted them for accuracy and legal compliance. He highlighted changes in the Airport, COA Director, CWF Superintendent, and DPW

Superintendent. Mr. Hanold stated that the Finance Committee and ATM should agree on the grading changes. Mr. Hanold, Mr. Ramsey, and Ms. Desroches discussed how the downgraded positions would be handled and stated that employees would be red lined not cut in pay.

Next Meetings

- a. 1/15/25 – Cemetery, COA, Airport, STM Articles
- b. 1/22/25 – 5:30 start time Library, CWF

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting:

Ms. Bell-Upp asked for a consensus on the proposed 5:30 start time on January 22. Committee members were favorable. Mr. Hanold wanted to revisit the meeting time for future meetings to see if there can be a time that is more beneficial to the Committee member’s time and the Montague staff’s time.

Ms. Bell-Upp wanted to know who hosts the future February 5th meeting with the school. Mr. Garvin from MCTV reported that in the past it has depended on the location of the meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Bowman makes the motion to adjourn at 6:56 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni - Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Angelica Desroches

Documents and exhibits:

Minutes of January 8, 2025

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5100	Sexton		700	2,000	1,100.00	2,000		
	TOTAL WAGES		700	2,000	1,100.00	2,000	-	-
5241	Grounds R & M	30,000	28,450	30,000	19,705.94	30,000		
5730	Dues and Memberships	150		150		150		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	30,150	28,450	30,150	19,705.94	30,150		-
5800	Capital Outlay							
	TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	-	-	-	-	-		-
	TOTAL CEMETERY	30,150	29,150	32,150	20,805.94	32,150	32,150	32,150
Change						-	0.00%	

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5241	Grounds R & M	30,000	30,000	-		
5245	Green Cemetery Startup	-	-	-		
5730	Dues and Memberships	150	150	-		



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Cemetery Commission Submitted by: Judith Lorei, Chair

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

The Cemetery Commission is not requesting a budget increase in FY26.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

Expansion. Our most significant expansion was to hire a new town Cemetery Sexton. In July, 2024 Amber Korby become Montague's first town Cemetery Sexton. She is responsible for providing tours of the cemetery, selling plots, processing deeds, marking graves for burial, coordinating with funeral directors and families for burials, assisting at the service when needed, and marking placement for headstones months after burial. We've received extremely positive feedback from funeral directors and families about Amber's professionalism, attention to detail and timely response in preparing for burial when a death occurs.

Enhancements. Each commission member is a "partner" to one or more of the town cemeteries. The partner's job is to assess its condition, keep an eye on any changes or irregularities and report back at monthly commission meetings. This assessment has resulted in additional maintenance of cemetery grounds including necessary pruning of trees and shrubs and removal of invasive vegetation.

Enhancements in Highland Woods (the new green burial section of Highland Cemetery) began in FY24 and continues this year. The forest floor of this 3 acre section has been cleared of downed trees and debris to make way for new graves. The Path of Reflection, a wood chip trail through the area is maintained by volunteers, as is the Circle of Reflection, the gathering area for mourners during burial services. The Circle of Reflection has also been the site for grief gatherings for the community. Two new benches will be installed in the Circle this Spring and a woodland garden has been created surrounding the Circle. Highland Woods is becoming a place where Montague residents and non-residents alike come to walk the Path and be in nature.

In addition to these activities, the Commission convened a second meeting of private cemetery operators (the first in FY24) to discuss challenges, share resources and offer support to each other.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

The commission approached the Selectboard at their 12/2/24 meeting to request that the Cemetery Sexton compensation move from a per-burial payment to an annual stipend. The responsibilities of the Sexton require far more time and effort than the \$100 burial fee covers. In addition, being paid at the time of burial doesn't cover time spent on other necessary responsibilities such as plot sales and other tasks related to post-burial work. The Cemetery Commission proposed an annual stipend of \$4,032 to cover 144 hours per year (\$28 per hour -the average salary in MA for this position). We believe that this model will make the Sexton position sustainable to ensure consistency in managing burials at Highland Cemetery.

Funding for the increase in annual stipend (an additional \$2,032) will come from the Cemetery Commission's Reserved Receipts for Appropriation account, an account with income generated through burial fees and plot sales.

The Commission began selling burial plots in Highland Woods in May, 2023. To-date we've sold 52 plots for a total of \$42,400 (\$700 for Montague residents/\$1,000 for non-residents). We've had a total of 22 burials in Highland Cemetery in calendar year 2024 (7 green burials) raising \$2,200 in burial fees.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

The commission received \$10,000 in funding from a special article approved at the March 2023 STM to prepare the green burial section of Highland Cemetery, Highland Woods. To date, we have \$945 remaining.

In October 2023 STM we received \$4,000 for Highland Woods signs and related costs. To date, we have \$656 remaining.

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5113	Council on Aging Director	45,384	45,384	46,557	22,281.00	46,557		
	Administrative Assistant					18,962		
5144	Longevity	500	500	500	900.00	900		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	45,884	45,884	47,057	23,181.00	66,419		-
5211	Electricity	3,732	2,780	3,840	1,686.88	3,500		
5214	Natural Gas	1,952	2,412	2,000	254.96	2,400		
5231	Water	75	88	75	60.75	88		
5232	Sewer	250	257	300	180.00	500		
5242	Buildings R & M	2,500	4,077	2,000		4,000		
5251	Other Equipment R & M		1,848	500	519.00	-		
5279	Custodial Services	4,000		2,500		-		
5344	Postage		34	300		-		
5451	Cleaning Supplies	200		300		300		
5586	Miscellaneous	-	48	-		-		
5710	Travel	-		400		-		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	12,709	11,545	12,215	2,701.59	10,788		-
	TOTAL COUNCIL ON AGING	58,593	57,429	59,272	25,882.59	77,207	77,207	77,207

Change 17,935 30.26%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hrly Rate	Rate #2 Hrs	Total Annual
7/15/2009	Director increase from 17 to 21 hrs/wk) M-Th	F10	42.44	1,097	46,556.68

DOH	7/15/2009	Svc FY26	16
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EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5113	Council on Aging Director	46,557	46,557	-		no change
	Administrative Assistant	-	18,962	18,962	100.00%	new position
5144	Longevity	500	900	400	80.00%	mandated
5211	Electricity	3,840	3,500	(340)	-8.85%	based on FY25YTD & anticipated 5% increase
5214	Natural Gas	2,000	2,400	400	20.00%	based on FY25YTD & anticipated 5% increase
5231	Water	75	88	13	17.33%	base rate low consumption
5232	Sewer	300	500	200	66.67%	anticipated rate increase
5242	Buildings R & M	2,000	4,000	2,000	100.00%	gutters, painting supplies & equipment rental
5251	Other Equipment R & M	500	-	(500)	-100.00%	moved to EOEA formula grant
5279	Custodial Services (16 hrs/wk)	2,500	-	(2,500)	-100.00%	moved to EOEA formula grant
5344	Postage	300	-	(300)	-100.00%	moved to EOEA formula grant
5451	Cleaning Supplies	300	300	-		
5586	Miscellaneous	-	-	-		
5710	Travel	400	-	(400)	-100.00%	moved to EOEA formula grant



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Council on Aging

Submitted by:

Roberta Potter

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

The COA is submitting a request to hire a part-time administrative assistant. As the Senior Center's programming, attendance, and complexity have grown, the mostly clerical aspects of the director's job have come to consume a significant amount of time that could be better spent providing more direct aid to seniors, collaborating with local agencies, planning, programming, and publicizing. Our local peer Councils on Aging are better staffed and, in some instances, offer fewer classes and programs than we do. This position will be at level B with an hourly rate between \$19.76 to \$24.31. At maximum, the one year salary would amount to \$18,962.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

In FY25 and going forward into FY26, the COA has become a resource for seniors requiring help with technology. Using funds from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (Digital Equity for Seniors), we have built a class curriculum, collaborated with the Franklin County Tech School, provided classes, and now have weekly tech help drop-in sessions. We will begin a second and equally complex Digital Equity in January of this year. Though we have hired a facilitator for these programs, the related administrative and supervisory responsibilities are the director's.

Similarly time consuming and extremely important are the collaborations the COA has expanded, initiated or will initiate with LifePath, FRCOG, The Brick House, The Montague Public Libraries, and others. The director is involved with various town, county and statewide programs including various Digital Equity initiatives, Mass in Motion, and Age Friendly Communities and, most importantly, the newly formed Montague Villages. As we have offered more direct aid to seniors including home repair grants, free firewood through the Montague Wood Bank, AARP Tax Aide tax preparation services, and food distributions, more people are coming to us for individual help. This is our mission and it is wonderful that more people are using the COA as a resource but each encounter is time consuming and usually requires follow up sessions. Much of this assistance has involved helping individuals with complex and mostly on-line applications and problem solving. As age related services have become more internet based, more people need help doing such things as applying for SNAP, Fuel Assistance, replacement Social Security Cards, Social Security benefits, unemployment benefits, etc. The director is increasingly involved in individual consultations which are consuming time that is also required for routine administrative tasks. As our reputation as a place to get help grows, more people are coming to us for that help.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any of your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26.

The COA is doing an inadequate job publicizing the services, programs, and classes that are available at the Senior Center. We have not maintained our website as well as we should; our newsletter is sporadic; we have not had the time or resources to market or expand our public presence in the community. In the director's absence, the daily operations of the Senior Center are handled by a very dedicated group of volunteers who rely solely on the director for advice, policy interpretation and clarification, and direction. The proposed position would help resolve these

deficiencies and give the director additional time to work with the volunteers. It is also important that there be an individual on staff who could accomplish administrative tasks independently in the COA director's absence.

4. **Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.**

Yes, the COA received funds to have the back of the aging Senior Center resided and various small repairs to the building trim. This work was completed. The COA Director is working with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office to have the building painted in the Spring of 2025. The budget request reflects expenses for painting supplies, painting equipment rental, and gutter installation

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
5111	Full Time Wages	109,976	109,450	113,838	54,520.00	117,325		
5114	Part Time Wages							
5124	PT FCTS Intern	25,000	22,621	20,000	19,669.25	25,000		
5132	Full Time Overtime	2,000	1,488	1,500	1,107.84	2,000		
5144	Longevity (year 6)	500	300	300		300		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	600	600	600	288.50	600		
	TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	138,076	134,459	136,238	75,585.59	145,225	-	-
5211	Electricity	16,000	16,455	16,000	6,392.13	18,000		
5213	Fuel Oil (House)	2,750	1,157	1,500	746.71	-		
5214	Natural Gas	2,250	1,580	1,800	135.15	1,500		
5215	Propane	1,000	57	1,000		1,000		
5231	Water	1,250	1,031	1,250	1,237.10	1,250		
5232	Sewer		77		150.00	400		
5241	Building & Grounds R & M	15,000	21,521	14,500	29,197.52	16,500		
5244	Equipment R & M	12,500	34,023	13,000	16,409.48	16,500		
5251	Beacon Lights R & M	3,500	2,981	3,000	8,405.05	3,000		
5275	Snow Removal Services	2,000	1,817	2,000	143.88	2,000		
5302	Legal	1,500	135	1,000		1,000		
5314	Seminars/Training	1,500		1,000		1,000		
5315	Other Professional & Technical	1,500	4,627	1,500	9,285.65	1,500		
5341	Telephone/Internet	3,300	3,707	3,750	1,414.70	3,750		
5344	Postage	350	36	200	38.60	150		
5345	Advertising	3,000	3,089	2,000	5,668.17	2,000		
5420	Office Supplies	1,500	3,023	1,500	2,229.28	2,000		
5443	Misc. Parts & Accessories	3,000	2,028	2,000	2,430.57	3,000		
5481	Gasoline	7,500	4,700	6,000	1,866.80	6,000		
5482	Diesel	8,500	3,069	6,000	4,041.18	6,000		
5500	House Expense	2,500	634	1,250	1,758.02	1,250		
5580	Other Supply Equipment	4,500	1,980	4,500		4,000		
5581	Other Supply Building	4,500	15,295	4,500	5,878.56	4,000		
5582	Clothing Allowance	3,750	4,888	4,250	2,231.63	4,450		
5584	Vending Exp	500	167	500	1,426.35	650		
5710	Travel	2,500	289	1,000	116.99	1,000		
5730	Dues	750	538	500		500		
5740	Insurance	18,000	19,316	19,500	22,593.00	20,000		
	Town Payment	8,000						
5790	Town Overhead	3,939	3,939	4,000	4,000.00	4,000		
	TOTAL EXPENSES	136,839	152,159	119,000	127,796.52	126,400	-	-
Capital Outlay								
5800	FAA Local Share	10,000						
	Total Capital Outlay	10,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL AIRPORT	284,915.00	286,617.52	255,238.00	203,382.11	271,625.00	271,625.00	271,625.00

Change 16,387 6.42%

Staffing - Base Wages excluding Overtime/Shift/Holiday

Date of Hire	Title	Grade/Step 7/1/2025	Hrly Rate	Rate #1 Hrs	Total Annual	Yrs Svc FY26	Long
5/11/2017	Airport Manager	F3	31.86	2,088	66,523.68	9.00	300.00
6/14/2021	Operations Mgr	D3	24.33	2,088	50,801.04	5.00	300.00

FY26 Revenue Estimates & details
 231,971 Projected Income
132,693 Estimated Taxation funding
 Sale of RE for remaining Pioneer Debt
70,993 Grant for Debt
 435,657 Total Rev

271,625 482 Operating - Level Services less Capital (assumes will be Sp Art)
 99,935 700 Debt
 64,097 900 Benefits
 435,657 Total Budget using original request less CO
 - Excess/(Deficit)

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY25	Request FY26	\$ Change	% Change	Explanation
5111	Airport Manager Wages	113,838	117,325	3,487	3.06%	
5111	Full Time Wages	-	-	-		
5124	PT FCTS Intern	20,000	25,000	5,000	25.00%	
5145	Longevity	-	-	-		
5132	Full Time Overtime	1,500	2,000	500	33.33%	
5144	Longevity (year 6)	300	300	-		
5145	Cell Phone Stipend	600	600	-		
5211	Electricity	16,000	18,000	2,000	12.50%	
5213	Fuel Oil (House)	1,500	-	(1,500)	-100.00%	
5214	Natural Gas	1,800	1,500	(300)	-16.67%	
5215	Propane	1,000	1,000	-		
5231	Water	1,250	1,250	-		
5241	Building & Grounds R & M	14,500	16,500	2,000	13.79%	
5244	Equipment R & M	13,000	16,500	3,500	26.92%	
5251	Beacon Lights R & M	3,000	3,000	-		
5275	Snow Removal Services	2,000	2,000	-		
5302	Legal	1,000	1,000	-		
5314	Seminars/Training	1,000	1,000	-		
5315	Other Professional & Technical	1,500	1,500	-		
5341	Telephone/Internet	3,750	3,750	-		
5344	Postage	200	150	(50)	-25.00%	
5345	Advertising	2,000	2,000	-		
5420	Office Supplies	1,500	2,000	500	33.33%	
5443	Misc. Parts & Accessories	2,000	3,000	1,000	50.00%	
5481	Gasoline	6,000	6,000	-		
5482	Diesel	6,000	6,000	-		
5500	House Expense	1,250	1,250	-		
5580	Other Supply Equipment	4,500	4,000	(500)	-11.11%	
5581	Other Supply Building	4,500	4,000	(500)	-11.11%	
5582	Clothing Allowance	4,250	4,450	200	4.71%	
5584	Vending Exp	500	650	150	30.00%	
5710	Travel	1,000	1,000	-		
5730	Dues	500	500	-		
5740	Insurance	19,500	20,000	500	2.56%	
	Town Payment	-	-	-		
5790	Town Overhead	4,000	4,000	-		
5800	FAA Local Share	-	-	-		
	Totals	255,238.00	271,225.00	15,987.00	0.06	

EXPENDITURES		Budget FY24	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Expended thru 12/31/2024	FY26 Level Services Request	FY26 BOS Recommend	FY26 BOS & Fin Comm Recommend
	Long Term Principal							
710-5901	Purchase Pioneer Aviation	63,000	63,000	67,000	67,000.00	67,000		
710-5902	Fuel Pump Upgrade	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000.00	4,000		
	Long Term Principal	67,000	67,000	71,000	71,000.00	71,000	-	-
	Long Term Interest							
751-5901	Purchase Pioneer Aviation	32,645	32,645	30,045	15,692.50	27,365		
751-5902	Fuel Pump Upgrade	1,890	1,890	1,730	905.00	1,570		
	Long Term Interest	34,535	34,535	31,775	16,597.50	28,935	-	-
	TOTAL WPCF DEBT	101,535.00	101,535	102,775.00	87,597.50	99,935.00	99,935.00	99,935.00
Change						(2,840)	-2.76%	



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 26

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: AIRPORT Submitted by: AIRPORT COMMISSION

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY26 budget request.

There are several changes that notable in the FY26 budget compared to the FY25 budget. A modest increase for wages 5111 from \$113,838 to \$117,318 include an increase for the Airport Manager from an hourly based step (E10) to a salary based step (F3), increasing from \$64,247 to \$66,517. This position, while still under compensated, will be in line with the other department heads that are all salary positions. A single step increase for the only other full time position completes the increases to that line item. In FY25 the part time intern wages were reduced by \$5,000 as part of a larger budget reduction, and in FY26 the funding is being restored to the full \$25,000, to allow for 2 rotating part time positions, where together it creates 1 full time position. Electricity increased by \$2,000 to cover the cost of a heat pump source system in place of convention heating oil system in one of the buildings. This budget compare to FY25 in most other line items, either increasing less than \$500 or in some cases decreasing. Overall the total increase from FY25 to FY26 totals \$16,380, with \$8,980 contributed to wages and the reaming to the general operational budget. It is important to remember that while it is a 5.75% increase from FY25 to FY26, in FY25 the budget was reduced by \$32,750 from the proposed to the actual, and this increase is still less than what would be the ideal operating budget. With the proposed budget the following would be the source of funding at this time: Airport Revenues: \$229,662. FAA Debt Service Grant: \$70,993. Taxation: \$132,693. (In FY25 some funds were used from the "sale of real estate" line to offset debt service that totals \$28,942) If that funding source is allocated in FY26 again, it would reduce the taxation request from \$132,693 to \$103,751. The FY26 budget was crafted while kneeling in mind the need to keep cost down and keep the facility operating safely and smoothly. There is no "one and done" solution to the airport funding vs airport revenue at this time. The submitted budget is the lowest it can be without beginning to have negative effects on the daily operation of the airport.

2. To this point in FY25, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe. None at this time.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY25 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY26. Continued inflation and lingering supply chain issues are the primary issues that have the greatest effect on the Airport and the ability to operate within a rather tight budget. For example, replacing a window in one of the several building on the airport cost \$4,500 in August 2024. This used up 100% of the allocated funds for the entire year for "Other Supply Building", a line item that should be bused to fund work outside of normal upkeep that would be funded from our "Building and Grounds" line item. Prior to 2020 this same window would have cost less than \$2,000. While attempting to keep a level funded budget plan in FY26, it is critical that some increases are added to allow for volatile energy markets and professional trade industries. In order to keep up on the preventative maintenance service on the 7 airport owned and operated buildings and structures the FY26 budget will need to have some room for increased allocation, and will also require some tough decision on what is completed for projects and what is pushed off until a later date. Until the Airport revenues increase to an acceptable level, the Airport Commission expects to continue with deferred maintenance due to the limited budget.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY24 or FY25? If so, please list share the current status of each of those expenditures/projects.

In FY24 the airport was allocated funding for the “local share” of a \$1.6 million dollar Airport Apron Replacement Project. The town is only responsible of 5% of the total project cost. This project is to take place in FY25, FY26, and FY27. Currently this project is on time and within the budget. Phase I was completed without issue, and provided the Airport Commission with a detailed environmental assessment of the proposed work area and any negative effects the work would have on the wildlife population. Phase II is underway now, which includes the planning, design, IFE, and bidding of the actual construction portion of this project. Phase III is expected to commence in January 2026 and conclude in late June 2026. In addition, the Airport received just shy of \$400,000 in MassDOT Aeronautics funding for the installation of a hangar door, purchase of equipment, and security camera installation all at a 100% state share. Funds were allocated from ARPA for the purchase of a new mower to replace the existing 16 year old unit that failed, this project is completed and closed out.

ARTICLE 6: MOVED: That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$24,000 for the purpose of supplementing the FY25 operating budget, with \$7,000 going to Airport PT Intern, \$13,000 to the Airport Build and Grounds, and \$4,000 to the Airport Equipment Repair and Maintenance accounts, said sum to be raised from Airport Retained Earnings.

Selectboard Recommends X-X

Finance Committee Recommends X-X

Background

\$7,000 to 600-5-482-5124 (PT Intern)- Due to no qualified individuals this year in the student hiring pool an employee from the summer was retained at a slightly higher rate to work for the winter and spring season. Additional work is also being completed in-house, where in the past it would have been outsourced to a contractor, increasing the internal labor hours. Both require additional funding for the position to keep it viable until the end of June. This will not increase the hours or related cost, it will allow us to maintain the current staffing levels.

\$13,000 to 600-5-482-5241 (Building & Grounds)- Many large expenses over the summer and fall have depleted this line item and additional funds are needed to operate until June. A significant amount of funding was put into preventative maintenance of the 6 buildings covered under this line item, including some preemptive repairs. To bring the facility closer to meeting the Department of Public Safety standards additional costs such as emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, first aid stations, and signage, were also expended. Despite the majority of repairs being done by airport staff, items that are electrical, plumbing, and propane related must be sourced out to licensed and insured professionals.

\$4,000 to 600-5-482-5244 (Equipment Repair & Maintenance)- Several smaller but unexpected expenses have depleted this line item. A gearbox on the large flail mower (DOP: 2011) had to be replaced costing over \$2,200. The airport operations truck, purchased with a 100% grant in 2019 required preventative and reactive maintenance repairs exceeding \$6,000 to ensure continued safe operation. In addition, the backup generator for the administration offices required \$2,000 in repairs to meet new safety code and emission requirements. While all necessary, these were not included or expected in the FY25 budget planning process.

Schedule III
Town Operating Budget

DEPT NO.	BUDGET FY24	BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD	\$ Increase	% Increase	main reason for change
				FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26			
GENERAL GOVERNMENT							
113 TOWN MEETING	2,980	3,180	3,180	3,180	-	0.00%	
122 SELECTBOARD	330,581	326,230	324,662	324,662	(1,568)	-0.48%	
131 FINANCE COMMITTEE	2,000	600	600	600	-	0.00%	
132 RESERVE FUND	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	-	0.00%	
135 TOWN ACCOUNTANT	90,500	93,000	95,044	95,044	2,044	2.20%	Software change
141 ASSESSORS	189,801	186,059	180,122	180,122	(5,937)	-3.19%	
145 TREASURER/COLLECTOR	231,048	206,965	208,335	208,335	1,370	0.66%	Change from elected to appointed
151 TOWN COUNSEL	80,000	87,475	82,475	82,475	(5,000)	-5.72%	
155 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	80,500	92,252	103,352	103,352	11,100	12.03%	Consultant cost increase
159 SHARED COSTS	85,907	93,499	112,430	112,430	18,931	20.25%	Payroll services
161 TOWN CLERK	243,041	237,224	219,144	219,144	(18,080)	-7.62%	
175 PLANNING	134,429	140,788	142,394	142,394	1,606	1.14%	
176 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS	700	700	700	700	-	0.00%	
190 PUBLIC BLDG UTILITIES	155,932	140,050	145,000	145,000	4,950	3.53%	3% predicted increase
197 FARMERS MARKET	1,000	5,200	5,700	5,700	500	9.62%	
TOTAL GENERAL GOVT	1,678,419	1,663,222	1,673,138	1,673,138	9,916	0.60%	
PUBLIC SAFETY							
211 POLICE	1,970,054	2,067,608	2,065,258	2,065,258	(2,350)	-0.11%	
211 POLICE CRUISER	68,100	60,000	70,000	70,000	10,000	16.67%	
212 DISPATCH	395,588	410,768	410,868	410,868	100	0.02%	
241 BUILDING INSPECTOR	148,621	155,082	149,926	149,926	(5,156)	-3.32%	
244 SEALER OF WEIGHTS	7,182	7,182	7,182	7,182	-	0.00%	
291 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	6,265	6,944	6,944	6,944	-	0.00%	
292 ANIMAL CONTROL	23,112	23,658	23,658	23,658	-	0.00%	
294 FOREST WARDEN	1,710	1,882	1,882	1,882	-	0.00%	
299 TREE WARDEN	30,285	30,474	30,474	30,474	-	0.00%	
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	2,650,917	2,763,598	2,766,192	2,766,192	115,275	4.17%	
PUBLIC WORKS							
420 DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS	1,747,506	1,772,006	1,823,964	1,823,964	51,959	2.93%	Wages/FRCOG bid/Ave A planters
423 SNOW & ICE	311,250	321,250	324,750	324,750	3,500	1.09%	
433 SOLID WASTE	679,221	802,776	835,300	835,300	32,524	4.05%	Casella contract increases
480 CHARGING STATIONS	7,380	11,980	11,980	11,980	-	0.00%	
491 CEMETERIES	30,150	32,150	32,150	32,150	-	0.00%	

TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	2,815,507	2,940,162	3,028,144	3,028,144	212,637	7.23%	
HUMAN SERVICES							
511 BOARD OF HEALTH	175,444	168,004	172,144	172,144	(3,300)	-1.96%	
		Schedule III					
		Town Operating Budget					
				SELECTBOARD			
				FIN COMM			
DEPT	BUDGET	BUDGET	REQUEST	RECOMMEND	\$	%	
NO.	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26	Increase	Increase	
HUMAN SERVICES							
541 COUNCIL ON AGING	58,593	59,272	77,207	77,207	17,935	30.26%	New position
543 VETERANS' SERVICES	76,500	77,897	101,000	101,000	23,103	29.66%	Predicted increase in benefits
TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES	310,537	305,173	350,351	350,351	39,814	13.05%	
CULTURE & RECREATION							
610 LIBRARIES	503,336	518,233	544,666	544,666	26,433	5.10%	Position shift and hour increases
630 PARKS & RECREATION	160,703	164,826	169,326	169,326	4,500	2.73%	Maintenance of lights and Montague Center park
691 HISTORICAL COMMISSION	500	500	500	500	-	0.00%	
693 WAR MEMORIALS	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	-	0.00%	
TOTAL CULTURE/RECREATION	666,139	685,159	716,092	716,092	30,933	4.51%	
DEBT SERVICE							
700 DEBT SERVICE	1,154,319	1,158,857	1,160,025	1,160,025	1,168	0.10%	
INTERGOVERNMENTAL							
840 INTERGOVERNMENTAL	113,924	116,874	120,359	120,359	3,485	2.98%	
MISCELLANEOUS							
910 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	2,490,334	2,657,083	2,751,724	2,751,724	94,641	3.56%	2.2% Retirement/5% health insurance prediction
946 GENERAL INSURANCE	120,600	119,600	123,188	123,188	3,588	3.00%	3% prediction
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	2,610,934	2,776,683	2,874,912	2,874,912	98,229	3.54%	
TOTAL TOWN BUDGET	12,000,696	12,409,728	12,689,213	12,689,213	279,485	2.25%	

Schedule IV
Clean Water Facility Budget

DEPT NO.	BUDGET FY24	BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD	\$ Increase	% Incr
				FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26		
CLEAN WATER FACILITY						
440 Wages & Expenses	2,015,729	2,116,590	2,167,248	2,167,248	50,658	2.39%
440 Capital Outlay	58,500	58,500	58,500	58,500	-	0.00%
700 Debt Service	483,614	478,365	485,028	485,028	6,663	1.39%
910 Employee Benefits	363,631	380,719	383,183	383,183	2,464	0.65%
SUBTOTAL CWF	2,921,474	3,034,174	3,093,959	3,093,959	59,785	1.97%
449 DPW SUBSIDIARY						
Wages & Expenses	84,650	85,150	85,150	85,150	-	0.00%
SUBTOTAL DPW SUBSIDIARY	84,650	85,150	85,150	85,150	-	0.00%
TOTAL CWF	3,006,124	3,119,324	3,179,109	3,179,109	59,785	1.92%

Schedule V
Airport Budget

DEPT NO.	BUDGET FY24	BUDGET FY25	REQUEST FY26	SELECTBOARD	\$	%		
				FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY26				Increase
AIRPORT								
482	Wages & Expenses	274,915	255,238	271,625	271,625	16,387	6.42%	Airport Manager salary
482	Capital Outlay/Local Share	10,000	-	-	-	-		
700	Debt Service	101,535	102,775	99,935	99,935	(2,840)	-2.76%	
910	Employee Benefits	40,515	61,664	64,097	64,097	2,433	3.95%	Retirement and health insurance
TOTAL AIRPORT		426,965	419,677	435,657	435,657	15,980	3.81%	