

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Final Minutes

Wednesday, January 25, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/792978291>

PRESENT: Vice Chair, Gregory Garrison, Clerk Dorinda Bell-Upp, John Hanold and Fred Bowman, members; Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Town Administrator Steve Ellis and Scribe BettyLou Mallet.

ABSENT: Francia Wisnewski, Jennifer Waryas and Chris Menegoni, Finance Committee members.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Gregory Garrison at 6:00 p.m. There was a quorum. The meeting is being aired on MCTV as well as recorded by Carolyn Olsen.

2. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES: January 11, 2023 – The members received the draft minutes of January 11, 2023 for their review. There were no questions. **On a motion by JH and second by FB, the minutes were approved as written. JH, aye; DB-U, aye; FB, aye; GG, aye.**

3. REVIEW OF STM FINANCIAL WARRANT ARTICLES

- \$10,000 for green burial area at Highland Cemetery
- Canal District Stabilization Fund (\$250K received will be transferred after 7/1/23)
- \$40,000 for FY23 Reserve Fund
- \$4,000 annual stipend for Great Falls Farmers Market Manager
- \$2,500 for FY23 Great Falls Farmers Market budget
- \$2,500 annual stipend for Hearing Officer and \$625 prorated
- \$1,500 for sealing skate park
- \$2,000 for evaluation of Blacksmith Shop
- \$32,250 for TF main library feasibility study
- \$2,500,000 CWF screw pumps
- \$68,000 for CWF work utility vehicle/transit van and charger
- \$80,000 for pick-up with plow and sander
- \$100,000 for one ton dump truck with plow and sander
- \$52,500 for inspection vehicle
- \$230,000 replace Colle roof
- \$660,000 (WAG) for Airport Building funded by FCTS aviation program grant

Carolyn Olsen placed the draft Special Town Meeting warrant on the screen for the audience to review. She and Steve Ellis briefly described the items listed above as well as the following which also appear on the draft warrant:

- The Town vote to change the name of the WPCF Capital Stabilization Fund to CWF Capital Stabilization Fund
- The Town vote to accept General Laws Chapter 32B, Section 20 and establish an Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund (OPEB Fund) effective March 3, 2023.
- The Town vote to authorize the Trustee of the OPEB Fund to employ reputable and knowledgeable investment consultants to assist in determining appropriate investments and pay for those services from the OPEB Fund

- The Town vote to grant certain Right of Way easements in association with reconstruction of the South Street Bridge in Montague Center.

Carolyn stated that Article 20 may be removed from the warrant. The FCTS Aviation Program received a grant to fund building a hanger at the airport. This will be through the FAA and FCTS and will not involve the Town.

Votes were not taken on the 20 articles on the draft warrant. The Finance Committee would like the other members to have the time to review.

4. REVIEW AND UPDATE BUDGET CALENDAR – The Committee received an updated budget calendar. There will be two meetings next week (Tuesday, January 31, 2023 – hybrid meeting with Finance Committee, Gill and Gill/Montague Regional School District. Wednesday, February 1, 2023 – STM warrant articles).

5. IS THERE ANY INTEREST IN OBTAINING CLEAR GOV FOR FY24? Carolyn stated she has received several calls from ClearGov regarding the use of their product. The members discussed the pros and cons such as the cost and learning a new budget program. General consensus is to continue working with Carolyn’s familiar spreadsheets and budget process. This can perhaps be discussed in the future among the Finance Committee and Selectboard.

6. UPDATES FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR – Steve spoke with the members about the Town Clerk’s request for a support position. The Selectboard have had conversations regarding the position but have not voted. He also stated the Selectboard will accelerate the subject of a member within the DPW to oversee the Sewer and Storm Water Collections as Montague does not have anyone in that position at this time. The cost of this person might possibly be absorbed by sewer ratepayers, by including it in the DPW subsidiary budget under the CWF. He also shared up-to-date information about the Host Community Agreements for cannabis and the legislation moving through the House to the Governor’s Office. JH asked for more information regarding the Town Clerk’s request for additional support. Steve and DB-U explained the need due to the changes of context of elections and regulations and increased workload. Steve also mentioned that instead of surge staffing, the Town Clerk would rather hire an individual who can be trained.

7. PREP FOR JANUARY 31, JOINT MEETING WITH GILL AND GMRSD - The joint meeting will be on Tuesday, January 31, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. This will be a hybrid meeting.

8. FUTURE MEETING TOPICS - None

9. TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS OF POSTING - None

10. ADJOURNMENT – On a motion by FB and second by JH, the Montague Finance Committee adjourned their meeting at 7:00 p.m. JH, aye; DB-U, aye; FB, aye; GG, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

BettyLou Mallet
Scribe

Montague Finance Committee approved: February 1, 2023