

**Capital Improvements Committee
FY17 Report to the Finance Committee**

Rev date 04.05.17

The four members of the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) met a total of eight times to consider and hear presentations related to proposed special articles for capital equipment purchases and related discretionary funds to be included in the fiscal year 2018 Montague town budget. These meetings began in mid-January and concluded in early April. They afforded the opportunity for meaningful discussion of these articles, with direct conversation with the proposers of the largest articles, as well as a tour of the Carnegie Library facility, allowing review of its capital needs. In addition, the CIC received a presentation from the DPW Facility Building Committee and discussed the project extensively, although no special article was submitted for inclusion on the FY17 Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

In addition to its usual focus on proposed capital expenditures, the CIC also considered and approved a special article of its own design that would amend the Montague Town Bylaws to reduce the number of CIC board members from six to five. This amendment would retain the feature of having one member appointed by the town Planning Board, but reduce the number of members appointed the Town Moderator from five to four. This was viewed as a practical step that would help address the persistent issue of member vacancies, and the related challenge of achieving a quorum of four on a six person committee. Regardless of the outcome of the town meeting vote, the committee anticipates the resignation of one active member at the start of FY18 and is actively recruiting to ensure that loss does not complicate operations in the coming year.

Following is a list of articles considered by the CIC with the outcome of those votes and any pertinent history related thereto. Overall, the committee enjoyed thoughtful and compelling presentations that underscored the need to make targeted investments in ongoing capital equipment and repairs, and wrestled with the magnitude of larger, competing capital project requests, headlined by the proposed new DPW Facility, consideration of which is expected to remain ongoing as the Town enters FY18, as well as library, senior center, WPCF and other building needs that may be anticipated in the coming years.

Capital Improvement Articles Considered

Department of Public Works Requests

- Mr. Valley moved to recommend the DPW's request **for a One Ton Dump Truck (\$76,000)** to the Finance Committee. Mr. Ellis seconded. Motion passed 4-0.
- Mr. Garrison moved to recommend the DPW's request **for a Flail Mower (\$110,000)** to the Finance Committee. Mr. Valley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.
- Mr. Garrison moved to **recommend that \$75,000 be allocated to the DPW Discretionary account** and Mr. Valley seconded. Motion passed 4-0. Note that this was \$25,000 less than requested by the Highway Superintendent, but consistent with the FY17 appropriation, and included an assumption that some roll-over funds would remain in this account at the close of FY17.

Subsequent to this vote, the DPW experienced a significant vehicle failure that required a commitment of the remaining discretionary account funds, leaving it with a projected balance closer to zero at the end of FY17. In light of this, the Mr. Valley moved to **support the Finance Committee's recommendation that \$100,000 be allocated to the DPW Discretionary account** and Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Public Libraries Requests

- Mr. Valley moved to recommend the Public Libraries' request for funds **to repair the roof and soffits of the Carnegie Library (\$30,000)** and Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0.
- Mr. Valley moved to recommend the Library's request for funds **for a building assessment of Montague's library buildings (\$45,000)** and Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Cemetery Commission Request

- Mr. Garrison moved to recommend the Cemetery Commission's request for funds **to improve a section of Dry Hill Cross Road to increase access to the Dry Hill Cemetery (\$65,000)** and Mr. Valley seconded. Motion failed 4-0 due to concerns that the cost estimate and resulting level of access were unclear to the committee.

Gill-Montague Regional School District Requests

- Mr. Ellis moved to recommend the GMRSD's request for **Electrical Upgrades at Hillcrest School (\$80,000)** to the Finance Committee. Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0.
- The committee moved NOT to recommend the GMRSD's request for Two Water Heaters at Sheffield School (\$25,000) to the Finance Committee. The committee suggested GMRSD review options to reduce the cost of this project and resubmit. A revised request was later submitted and Mr. Valley moved to recommend the GMRSD's revised request for the **purchase and installation of two new hot water heaters at the Sheffield Elementary School (\$15,000)** to the Finance Committee. Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0. This request came in below the CIC's usual \$25,000 threshold for review, but was considered due to its previous negative recommendation.
- The CIC took the GMRSD's request for additional funds to increase a previous appropriation for the purpose of restructuring the stage to add classroom space at Hillcrest Elementary (\$22,850) under advisement, noting this would increase the budget for this previously approved project to \$82,850, building on \$60,000 appropriated through Article #8 of the 9/29/16 Special Town Meeting. (No motion needed.)
- The CIC had substantive discussion of UST tanks that will require removal from the Hillcrest and Sheffield/Administration campuses. It was determined that the Town is not obligated to address this need in the coming fiscal year. The project cost may be in the vicinity of \$650,000 and will be considered in the FY18 budget process.

Water Pollution Control Facility

- Mr. Garrison moved to recommend the joint request of the DPW and WPCF for funds for **Lining & Cleaning Sewer Lines on Avenue A (\$385,000)** to the Finance Committee. Mr. Valley seconded. Motion passed 4-0. This continues an ongoing investment to ensure the integrity of our sewer infrastructure. It will be a continuing priority in coming years.
- Mr. Garrison moved to recommend the WPCF's request for funds for a **Feasibility Study for a Final Clarifier Upgrade (\$85,000)** to the Finance Committee. Mr. Valley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.
- Mr. Garrison moved to recommend the WPCF's request for funds for Repairs or **Replacement of WPCF Oil Tanks (\$80,000)** to the Finance Committee. Mr. Valley seconded. Motion passed 4-0. This article was later rescinded at the request of the WPCF director as it was determined that the underground storage tanks in question meet current regulations.

- Mr. Garrison moved to recommend the WPCF’s request for a new **WPCF Utility Truck (\$48,500)** to the Finance Committee. Mr. Valley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.
- Mr. Valley moved to recommend to the Finance Committee a **WPCF request to support valve automation and a SCADA alarm system (\$35,000)** and Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0.
- Mr. Garrison moved to recommend to the Finance Committee a request **allocate funds to the WPCF Capital Stabilization Fund (\$200,000)** and Mr. Valley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Votes related to a New DPW Facility

While the CIC did not receive a formal request for funding of a proposed new DPW Facility, the committee did receive a presentation from the building study and took two votes related thereto.

- Mr. Garrison moved to recommend the public works facility design and cost as presented by the Public Works Facility Building Committee and it is seconded by Mr. Bowman. **The motion failed** to pass 0-1-3. The committee noted the lack of details pertaining to specific costs and to still-in-discussion details regarding the potential for co-location of all equipment at the new facility or possible plans to continue use of some or all existing DPW facility buildings.
- Mr. Garrison moved to affirm the **CIC’s agreement that a new DPW facility is needed**. Mr. Bowman seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Vote related to Capital Improvement Committee Membership

- Mr. Garrison moved to place an article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant to **reduce the number of members appointed by the Town Moderator from five to four, reducing the size of the committee to five total members**. Mr. Ellis seconded and the motion passed 4-0. The Committee would continue to include one additional member appointed by the Planning Board.