

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Final Minutes

Wednesday, August 24, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/743053642>

PRESENT: Chair Francia Wisnewski, Vice-Chair Greg Garrison, Chris Menegoni, John Hanold and Clerk Dorinda Bell-Upp, members; Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Town Administrator Steve Ellis; Annie Levine, Cemetery Commission; Scribe BettyLou Mallet.

ABSENT: Jennifer Waryas

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair FW. The meeting is being held via Zoom and is being aired by MCTV as well as recorded by CO. Roll call vote was taken. FW reviewed the items on the agenda with the FinCom members. DB-U requested a new item for discussion of creating a PDF document of all of the documents for discussion in future meetings rather than having several attachments.

2. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR JULY 13, 2022 – All of the members received the draft minutes of July 13, 2022 for their review. No discussion. **A motion was made by JH to accept the minutes of July 13, 2022 as written. Second by GG. CM, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye. Minutes approved.**

3. RESERVE FUND TRANSFER REQUEST – Cemeteries requesting \$725

The members received a Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund in the amount of \$725 from the Cemeteries – Green Burial. Annie Levine joined the meeting and explained to the members that the Town of Montague will be offering a green burial space. This request will pay for the consultation and mapping services that will finish Phase One of Highland Cemeteries green burial section. JH asked about this unexpected amount and Annie explained that it was a new project and had been underestimated in the amount of work necessary. She believes in future years, the income made from selling the green burial plots will replenish the account. **On a motion by GG and second by JH, the committee approved the transfer request of \$725.00 from the Reserve Fund to 001-5-491-5245-000 Cemeteries-Green Burial. CM, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye. The transfer request was approved.**

Steve Ellis noted and Annie confirmed that this will be the last year Mike Fleming will be maintaining the cemeteries. Tom Bergeron does not have the staffing and Annie stated the department is calculating hours needed to maintain the cemeteries and will come before the Selectboard in the future to discuss.

4. FINALIZE RECOMMENDED FINANCIAL POLICIES – A-1 Annual Budget Process

FW reviewed the historical pieces of the financial policies giving the timelines and the versions presented. The policy for discussion this evening (A-1 Annual Budget Process) was distributed to the members and the revised version was presented on the screen by CO. The policy was discussed section by section and minor adjustments were made such as improvements in the language.

FW thanked the committee for their thorough review and comments. She now feels the policy is final and move forward. **JH proposed a vote for this document to be the final draft and move forward**

to the stakeholders for their review. The proposal was second by GG. No discussion. CM. Aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye. CO will make all of the revisions discussed this evening and email the document to the Capital Improvements Committee who will place on their agenda for discussion on September 14, 2022.

5. UPDATES FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND TOWN ACCOUNTANT

a. Town Administrator – Report of Cannabis Impact Fee Expenditures

The committee received a copy of a letter written to Seth Rutherford (253 Organic, LLC) from Steve giving an account of the cannabis impact fee-support appropriations and expenditures to date. Steve gave a history of the host community agreement which began in 2019. The document shows that business has been solid through the pandemic and that the “big ticket items” are the school adjustment counselor and Strengthening Families Program implemented through an RFP at The Brick House.

Steve spoke of the new reform act bill and how the town is supportive, but depending on regulations during relicensing and review of the agreement there may be significant changes. He will discuss this subject at length with the Selectboard at Monday’s meeting. JH asked if the police training as well as the positions at G-M and FCTS were vulnerable. Steve stated the police training could be held if expenditures were placed on hold and he encouraged the school departments not to adopt contracts with long-term obligations. FW encouraged members to attend this coming Monday’s Selectboard meeting for more information.

b. Town Accountant – End of year update

Carolyn stated the audit field work is almost complete and there were no major findings. She does not see any immediate need for free cash when forecasting figures that may result from settlement of labor contracts and fuel usages. She also spoke about the affordable assessment and new growth.

6. FUTURE MEETING DATES AND TOPICS

FW reviewed the cycle of meetings which are held on the second Wednesday of every month. DB-U would like to have all of the materials in one document and volunteered to create such document beginning the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by JH and second by GG, the meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m. CM, aye; DB-U, aye; GG, aye; JH, aye; FW, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

BettyLou Mallet
Scribe

Meeting materials – Draft Minutes July 13, 2022; Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund (cemetery); Revised A-1 Annual Budget Process policy with JH emailed edit requests (8/24/22); SB letter to Seth Rutherford, 253 Organic, LLC dated August 9, 2022.

FinCom Vote: 09/14/2022 approved