

**MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.**  
**This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded:**  
<https://vimeo.com/861863640>

Finance Committee Chair Francia Wisnewski called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Finance Committee members present:** Chair Francia Wisnewski, Vice Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp, Clerk Fred Bowman, and members Greg Garrison, John Hanold, and Chris Menegoni

**Finance Committee members absent:** Jennifer Waryas

**Others present:** Town Administrator Steven Ellis, Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey, Clean Water Facility (CWF) Superintendent Chelsey Little, and Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen

The meeting was recorded by MCTV as well as by Carolyn Olsen.

**Meeting minutes:**

Mr. Hanold moved to approve the minutes of August 9, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.  
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

**Presentation of Stipend Recommendations to Selectboard**

Ms. Wisnewski will present the recommended stipends and the underlying rationale to the Selectboard on October 16<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Bell-Upp and Mr. Hanold will also attend.

**Fall Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

**\$500,000 for Montague Center Park improvements**

- Parks and Recreation has applied for a grant that would provide 68% of the \$500,000 cost of a new playscape at the Montague Center Park. The grant requires that the Town fully fund the project, with reimbursement to follow. The Town will ultimately be responsible for approximately \$160,000. The estimated cost is from a landscape architect.
- The project has been reduced in scope to just the new playscape. The playscape will be ADA compliant and include standard elements with a unique design.
- Parks and Recreation is aware of the ongoing maintenance costs associated with these improvements.
- Ms. Bell-Upp expressed concern about spending a large amount of money from the Town Capital Stabilization on this project when the schools have so many needs.

Mr. Garrison moved to recommend \$500,000 for Montague Center Park improvements, to be funded from Town Capital Stabilization Fund. Seconded by Mr. Menegoni and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

### **Set up new Clean Water Facility (CWF) Do Not Use (DNU) Stabilization fund for \$68,100**

We are getting the USDA grant and loan (about 35% grant) for the screw pumps. A condition will be that our capital stabilization for Clean Water Facility not go below \$68,100 during the forty year term of the agreement. It makes more sense to create a separate stabilization fund to ensure this money is properly segregated and not accidentally spent in the future, as 40 years is a really long time to keep track of anything.

Mr. Hanold moved to recommend creating a new Clean Water Facility (CWF) Do Not Use (DNU) Stabilization fund and funding it with \$68,100 from CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Garrison and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

### **Additional \$209,000 for CWF backup generator installation**

- Article 18 of the May 7, 2022 Annual Town Meeting, provided \$130,000 for the purchase and installation of a backup generator for the Clean Water Facility. After purchasing a used generator, the remaining balance is \$101,000.
- The bids for the installation came in significantly higher than anticipated, with the lowest bid at \$282,130. CWF staff will be conducting all site work to keep costs down as compared with a third-party contractor acting under the electrical contractor.

Mr. Hanold moved to recommend \$209,000 to increase Article 18 of the May 7, 2022 Annual Town Meeting, to be funded from CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Garrison and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

### **\$95,000 for 2 pump station generators**

- The CWF had planned to begin replacing the generators at Montague's 8 pump stations starting in FY25, but a recent regular servicing indicated that 2 of these pumps are now unserviceable, so they need to be replaced now.
- All of the generators were last replaced in 1980.
- The replacements will be standalone generators that will eliminate the need for the generator sheds, which will also improve the aesthetics at the locations.
- The replacements of the remaining generators are part of the long-term capital plan.

Mr. Garrison moved to recommend \$95,000 to purchase and install 2 pump station generators, to be funded from CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

### **Clean Water Facility \$7,566.81 prior year bill from Veolia**

Back in October of 2021, there was an exceedingly large bill due to the CWF having to transport liquid loads rather than sludge cake to accommodate the vendor. A credit was negotiated, but the final adjusted bill was never sent. An audit by the vendor disclosed the unbilled amount, which was finally sent to the CWF this summer.

Mr. Garrison moved to recommend \$7,566.81 for payment of a prior year CWF bill, to be funded from CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisniewski – Aye

#### **\$50,400 for CWF Local Limits study**

- The new EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) requires an updated Local Limits Study to be completed. The last Local Limits Study was done in 1998, and since then the industrial landscape has changed drastically. A Local Limits Study is used to determine loading limits (think of it like a pie) at the wastewater treatment facility, taking into consideration industry types and volumes of discharge compared to normal residential loadings (think pieces of the pie with how large each piece is depending on the type of industry discharges vs residential discharges.) It is important to have this study performed in order to set enforceable discharge limits on significant industrial users that can be supported by data and lawfully enforced. The quote from Wright-Pierce is \$44,000 but additional work will be done by staff incurring additional expenses for contracted lab work.
- This needs to be done every eight years and is now included in the Capital Improvements Committee's long-term plan.
- Future studies may be able to have most if not all of the work done in-house, but the timing requirements prevented that this year.

Mr. Garrison moved to recommend \$50,400 for a CWF local limits study, to be funded from CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisniewski – Aye

#### **\$99,900 for CWF consulting for compliance and regulations**

- This article is for several individual projects that are required by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as part of a Notice of Noncompliance (NON).
  - \$23,000 2022 Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Monitoring Report
  - \$23,000 2023 CSO Monitoring Report
  - \$21,700 Annual Collection System Operations & Maintenance (O&M)/ Inflow & Infiltration Control Plan Annual Report
  - \$11,100 2023 Collection System O&M Corrective Action
  - \$9,600 Sewer Use Ordinance
  - \$11,500 Minimum Controls Report
- Part of the cost is due to DEP requiring us to use Springfield's model. While we strongly oppose being held to these standards, the models are limited to municipalities, and because most smaller towns don't have combined sewer and storm water collection systems, only larger cities generally have comparable systems.
- There is no current legislative aid that would be available to pay for these projects.
- Mr. Menegoni asked if separating out the currently combined sewer and stormwater systems would make sense as a long-term solution. It would at first glance, but the current cost estimate is around \$25Million. The intention is to chip away at the issue as we do major road

projects, but it is unlikely that we will ever be able to completely separate the two systems, especially in downtown Turners Falls.

Mr. Garrison moved to recommend \$99,900 for CWF consulting for compliance and regulations, to be funded from CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

#### **\$50,000 for CWF consulting for collection systems assessment and plans**

- We are required to have a third-party review of our capacity, management, operations, and maintenance (CMOM).
- The result will also provide us with a required manual which will be a blueprint for going forward. The manual will map out responsibilities and timing of maintenance needs and will provide the information needed to create many of the reports listed in the preceding article.
- We also need standard operating procedures for high flow protocols. Some of the lacks in this area were called out in the NON.

Mr. Garrison moved to recommend \$50,000 for CWF consulting for collection systems assessment and plans, to be funded from CWF Retained Earnings. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

#### **Updates from Town Administrator**

While the current focus has been on preparing for the October 10<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting, we are also about to start the wage and classification study through the Collins Center that is funded through a state Community Compact grant. We hope to have the final results in February. Since any implementation of any changes are likely to involve contract negotiations it is unlikely that any changes will be ready for the May 2024 Annual Town Meeting. The current union contracts expire on June 30, 2025. It should be noted that we will be compared to comparable municipalities, but not to the state or federal governments or the public sector.

**Future meetings** – The next meeting will be September 13, 2023

#### **Future meeting topics –**

Complete review of Fall Special Town Meeting warrant articles  
Review Financial Policies (Due 10/1)  
Review Affordable Assessment Calculation ?  
FY25 Budget Projections

**Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting** – none

#### **Finance Committee Adjournment**

MsMr. Bowman makes the motion to adjourn at 7:29 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Olsen

**Documents and exhibits:**

Minutes of August 9, 2023

Draft warrant/motions for October 10, 2023 Special Town Meeting