

**Shutesbury Finance Committee Minutes**  
**Tuesday, December 6, 2011, 6:50pm**

**Members Present:** Lori Tuominen, Eric Stocker, Weezie Houle, Al Hanson, Rus Wilson and Gary Hirshfield

**Members Absent:** George Arvanitis; **Visitors Present:** Becky Torres, Ellen McKay, Walter Tibbets, Elaine Puleo, Al Springer

- 1) Meeting called to order at 7pm. Joined Select Board
- 2) Ellen McKay: 7 pm – What her job is. Timeline: RE & PP tax are on a FY and the Excise is run on the calendar year
  - a) Real Estate - First quarter bills go out in June. The bills arrive by July 1. \$ due by August 1. 80-100 bills go directly to the banks, the rest go to the homeowners. 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter bills are printed around the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in September, due November 1. Third quarter bills are based on the new valuation and tax rate are sent out by Feb. 1. Fourth quarter bills are due May 1.
    - i) Payments can be made by mail, drop off, lock box or online.
    - ii) When Ellen gets a payment, she enters it in the computer.
    - iii) She hands out abatement applications. When abatement is approved she has to record that info. Abatements are applied to the fourth quarter.
    - iv) Exemptions – form of abatement – Veteran’s, Elderly (age 65) – 2 kinds 1) Income based (\$1,000) 2) asset based (\$175) are granted. You have to prove every year that you are eligible with appropriate documentation.
    - v) There are about 1,200 to 1,300 parcels.
    - vi) Commitment book has a list of all parcels.
    - vii) If current FY RE tax bills aren’t paid by May 14ish Ellen sends out demands. Under the statute she gives about a month, if not paid, Ellen initiates a tax title process. If they continue to ignore Ellen, then it goes into the newspaper, posted in 2 places in town, then two weeks later Ellen files an Instrument of Taking at the Registry of Deeds. This means that they can’t convey the property. The town then has the first lien priority. The town has priority over the banks. Subsequent tax bills
  - b) Excise – decreasing valuation. Rate is \$25/\$1,000 - After demand is sent it goes to the deputy collector. 20% of excise tax bills end up on demands.
  - c) Personal Property tax bills collection process is a combination of RE & Excise.
- 3) Walter Tibbetts: 7:46pm –
  - a) Walter submitted a level funded and -5% budgets.
  - b) Capital Planning
    - i) Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus replacement will cost about \$70,000 at \$6,500 each for 12, at some point in the next three to five years.
    - ii) Turnout gear – should be replace more often
    - iii) Trucks – Should be able to get at least 25 years out of a truck in a town like ours
    - iv) Engine 1: 1987, Engine 2: 1997, Rescue: 1989
    - v) In the future, ideally he would like a new Class A pumper which may cost \$350,000+/- . Refurbishment – about the same price
  - c) Stipend line item will be about \$1,500 short for the year due to an increase in the force.
- 4) Discussion of audit frequency. We will come back to this at a later date.
- 5) Discussed minutes of November 16. To be approved next meeting.
- 6) Adjourned at 10:10pm

Respectfully submitted, *Weezie Houle*