

**Shutesbury Board of Selectmen at the Finance Committee meeting
With the School Committee
Tuesday January 8, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

Select Board Members present: Chairwoman Elaine Puleo and members Al Springer and April Stein.

Also Present: Finance Committee Co-chairmen Lori Tuominen and Rus Wilson, and members Weezie Houle, Allen Hanson and George Arvanitis, School Committee Chairman Clif Read and members Mare Fox and Emily Bloch, Shutesbury Elementary School Principal Robert Mahler, Erving School Union 28 Superintendent Joan Wickman and Director of Finance and Operations Michael Kociela, Shutesbury resident Michael Vinsky, Town Administrator Rebecca Torres, and Administrative Secretary Leslie Bracebridge recording.

A quorum of the Board of Selectmen was reached at 7:30 P.M. at the Shutesbury Town Hall at the already in progress, Finance Committee meeting.

Topics

1. **Select Board Chairman Elaine Puleo** reminded all present of the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools 4-Town meeting of Selectmen, Finance and School Committees on Saturday, January 12, at the Amherst-Pelham Middle School Library for a budget discussion.
2. **Joan Wickman on Union 28 FY 14 Budget:**
 - There is a 1.88% increase in the Union 28 budget:
 - Union 28 put an attorney on retainer for contract negotiations and other potential legal issues.
 - Increase of insurance costs as Union 28 is now carrying their own Workman's Comp.
 - Despite the increase, Shutesbury will be paying \$1,018 less than in FY13 because our student percentage went down from 24.9 in FY 13 to 24.28% for FY 14.
 - The total cost for Shutesbury is \$132,169.
 - The Union 28 budget is embedded into the Elementary School budget by categories.
3. **Shutesbury Elementary School FY 14 Budget :**
 - There is a 3.5% increase mostly due to SPED.
 - Audit line #5 shows a \$3500 increase: A Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) end of year financial report requires an annual audit. They try to make it coincide with the town's audit to save expense. In the future Union 28 may put in a smaller amount annually rather than have it fluctuate. The audit was last done in 2009.
 - Overall it is a level service budget.
 - The budget adds one new 40% essential skills teacher for students who need more support, but do not qualify for special education.
 - A special needs tutor was removed from the budget.
 - A new DESE rule is all about changing the gap between high and low performing students:
 - Shutesbury had too large of a gap and became a level-2 school.
 - Shutesbury is trying close the gap and resume a level-1 status.
 - In the revenues section line #136 REAP (federal funds) are decreasing slowly, year by year.
 - In FY 13 the Preschool contributed \$10,000 toward fuel to compensate for use of utilities and space. In FY 14 \$5,000 of the preschool tuition fund (\$10,000 total -\$5,000 for fuel) is going to support additional teachers (2nd grade and pre-school) salaries.
 - If an additional teacher is needed in the Early Childhood program next year, fees will be raised.
 - Trying to maintain the early childhood program; adding a second staff person.
 - How confident that the grants will continue?
 - There is some talk about removing kindergarten support for full day kindergarten schools in favor of support to level 3 and 4 schools with ½ day kindergartens elsewhere in the state.
 - Local officials don't feel this is fair to towns such as ours.
 - The final designation of balances are not by the state until June & July, too late to budget for.
3. **School Security:**
 - The School Safety Committee has been looking at lock-down system upgrades.

- They have used up a \$5,000 grant from MMIA and 40% of the equipment is installed.
 - In light of the Newtown CT event, the School Committee recommendation is to finish the system as soon as possible.
 - They will need an amount of close to \$10,000 more.
 - The School Committee questions how the upgrades can be funded soonest. The 2 options are:
 - Finance Committee Reserve Fund or
 - Special town meeting vote of cash.
 - There will be a Parent Forum to discuss school security next Monday, January 14, 2013.
 - **Selectmen Chairman Puleo strongly urged the Finance Committee to approve a Finance Committee vote of up to \$10,000 from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund to be placed in a special school safety and security budget line which will be maintained by the town in order to finish the upgrade and the Finance Committee voted so unanimously.**
 - The School Committee has already voted to support the completion of the building safety package.
4. **School Lunch Program:**
- Food is good; children are eating it.
 - Starting a new breakfast program.
 - Serving 80meals/day.
 - Get \$2.81 for a free meal.
 - We will run in the red for the year. There will be a \$10,000 offset from budget line #83.
5. **New breakfast program:**
- The breakfast program will cost \$1.50/child. It is not expected to run in the red.
 - It started after the holiday break: oatmeal, fruit, milk, and yogurt.
 - Less than 10 children are eating breakfast right now;15 were anticipated. It will grow.
 - There are state and federal funds for families that qualify for free and reduced lunches.
 - The reporting has doubled due to the breakfast program.
6. **Other expenses:**
- Line 82 will be maintained as it may be used.
 - April voiced support of early intervention of special needs, resulting in self-supporting adults.

Before the school related people left the meeting at 8:40 PM, a reminder announcement was made about the next Selectboard, Finance and School Committees meeting on Tuesday, March 5 at 7:30 PM.

The Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) Consultants' report will be delivered on January 24. The executive summary will be sent out in a town-wide mailing, it will be at the library, at the school and it will be put online. (The committee plans to stuff the mailing January 25th at the elementary school.)

There will be a presentation by the Educational and Financial Consultants on February 2 from 1 to 3 PM at the Amherst-Pelham Regional Middle School auditorium. The snow-date is the same time on the following Saturday.

The Shutesbury Regional School District Planning Committee will schedule a presentation to a Shutesbury town wide meeting. The results of that meeting will influence how Shutesbury's representatives will vote.

The Select Board **adjourned from the Finance Committee meeting at 8:56 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Bracebridge
Administrative Secretary