

TA Report 4.26.13

**BEAR IN THE BACK YARD! Pelham Hill Rd., Shutesbury.
Take down your bird feeders right away! (if you haven't already...)**



courtesy of Robin Harrington

**SES Spaghetti Supper, TONIGHT! Friday, April 27
Don't forget! Good old Spaghetti Night at Shutesbury's Finest Italian Restaurant!**

TOWN MEETING IS MAY 4, 2013, SATURDAY at 9:00am at the Shutesbury Elementary School. Put it on your calendar. New England representative government at its best! Come learn about your town, participate and find a place to volunteer. TRASH BAGS available at Town Meeting!

POT LUCK LUNCHEON At the Town HALL TUESDAY May 7 at noon

(for folks 55 AND UP, Yes, I qualify and you may too!)

We have invited SES principle Bob Mahler as our honored guest to this months pot luck luncheon. Come share a meal and a conversation with Bob before he retires. He has brought a great deal of joy to our elementary school and worked hard for our children.

Join us May 7, at noon.

Call Marilyn Tibbetts 259-1976, by Monday, 5/6/13. Give her your name and tell her what dish you are bringing to share.

SHUTESBURY TOWN MEETING 2013

Decisions for Shutesbury's voters this year are limited to 16 Town Meeting Articles. The first two are for Community Preservation Committee maintenance and the allocation of taxes to the three categories, Historic, Open Space, Community Housing and budgeted reserves. The third article is to renovate the Hearse House at the cemetery on Leverett Rd.

Article four invites reports from all town officials about their activities this year.

Article five is the town budget. The budget being presented is a balanced budget. One change is a new Salary Grade, Step Schedule developed by the Personnel Board. The increases reflect a scarce market for municipal financial people, police contract changes and a cyclical need to realign job descriptions and point system by grade and steps.

Debt amounts remain in the appropriated budget to be allocated to capital stabilization for future needs, part of our capital plan. Article 6 is the request to transfer \$116,306 to our capital stabilization fund.

Two capital requests, \$4500 for fire truck tires and \$25,000 for a new library are appropriated in the budget, no separate warrant articles.

On Sept. 27, 2012, Shutesbury's free cash was certified at \$1,071,839. We are still earmarking \$200,000 to pay back DEP for the work at the fire station in removing 15,000 yards of contaminated soil. Our cash reserve position is strong helping us build capital reserves.

Article 15, a one-time request of \$20,000 from the Building Committee is requested from free cash. The money is for a roof repair at the elementary school and tiling of the senior lounge.

Article 14 is a free cash request of \$140,000 for a new highway dept. loader. There has been a great deal of discussion about surplus equipment and the pros and cons of the two philosophies, buy new or buy used and how those issues impact service to the community.

Article 13, OPEB (other post employment benefits) funding increases by another \$10,000 to \$20,000 appropriated, with a \$30,000 free cash request in the article to continue the \$50,000 per year commitment. Next year we appropriate \$30,000 and request \$20,000 from free cash incrementally achieving our funding goal.

Shutesbury Elementary School budget increases by \$61,326 and the Regional budget increases by \$58,000. At this point we are anticipating only a little more than \$3300 in increased education, chap. 70 money to achieve these increases.

Article 12 is the Amherst regional agreement formula that we vote each year to allow the four towns of the region to use an alternative method to the state statutory method. The alternative method we use is a per pupil calculation based on a five year rolling average, the same formula used prior to ed reform in 1992.

While budget pressures remain we are able in this budget to respond to department requests and live within the prop 21/2 guidelines set by state law for taxation. Taxes continue to increase but there is no request for an override. We are planning for the future in this budget with the goal of avoiding future overrides.

The largest driving force for small town property taxation is education. We need to continue to work with the state, legislators and the Governor urging them to shoulder more of this burden. And continue to explore all methods possible, such as regionalization, to provide high quality education and control cost.

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