

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Jan. 27, 2009
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Eric Stocker, chairman, Bill Wells, Rus Wilson, Patrick J. Callahan, Lori Tuominen and Elaine Puleo. Guests: David Dann, town administrator and Becky Torres, selectwoman.

The meeting convened at 7:03 p.m.

The minutes of the Jan. 13, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Eric reported that he had attended a recent meeting of the Shutesbury School Committee and says the members will have the proposed budget for next year down to the 2.75-percent increase the Finance Committee requested. That figure includes funding for Union 28. He says he told them that things could still change because of the state budget problems.

David Dann says he attended a recent meeting with Paul Reville, the state commissioner of education, and found him to be very thoughtful and intelligent. The meeting was about education reform and regionalization. Reville says there will be some changes and reforms, but no new state money will be made available.

The Finance Committee then agreed that as an appointment to the collaboration on regionalization committee for the four towns in the region, Eric and Lori will attend the first meeting to scope it out. Both say they are interested but may not want to make a major time commitment to the committee.

Lori and Rus, who serve on the Capital Planning Committee say that this year's requests will be held to \$10,000. In the past, the town's capital budget has been between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per year.

David Dann says the energy audit of town buildings will be done later in the week. He also says the Building Committee is developing a comprehensive upgrade policy for Town Hall, the elementary school and other town buildings. The Finance Committee agreed to create a new budget line item to contain the .25 percent it asked town departments to set aside for energy conservation and insert this line into the main budget. Early estimates are that this process will produce about \$13,600.

David reported that a meeting with FEMA and MEMA about the costs for cleanup of the December ice storm takes place later in the week. He says if the final cost comes in at around \$50,000, the town will have to pay about \$12,000 and the two agencies will pay the other 75 percent.

Patrick agreed to serve on the police contract negotiating committee.

David says the governor's proposed budget cuts will be between \$18,000 and \$20,000 for the town. He says the current version of the FY 2010 budget has no shortfall, but if the Finance Committee includes the \$13,600 for the energy conservation, and adds an additional \$5,000 reduction in the line item for investment income, a new deficit of \$18,600 is created. However, David says he is confident he can find about \$20,000 in cuts that will remove this gap. He will report back to the committee at the next meeting on his efforts to close the funding gap.

The next meeting is set for Feb. 10 with the selectmen and School Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.