

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Jan. 9, 2007
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Eric Stocker, chairman, Russ Greco, Lori Tuominen, Rus Wilson, Al Springer and Patrick J. Callahan.

The meeting convened at 7:09 p.m.

Al Springer reported that the cost to repair the Lake Wyola dam is likely to be around \$250,000 once the cost of various permits is factored into the equation.

Russ Greco questioned the wisdom of spending nearly one-quarter million on the diminutive and apparently increasingly enfeebled structure. He greatly amused the committee and expressed a widely held opinion when he referred to the dam using a terse and earthy vernacular expression that unfortunately is inappropriate for inclusion in the minutes.*

The minutes of the Dec. 19 meeting were then approved unanimously.

Eric noted that Elementary School Committee and Union 28 superintendent were to meet jointly with the selectmen and finance board at 8 p.m. and opened a discussion of the budget proposal submitted by the school board. It called for an overall increase in spending of 7.16 percent for the coming year. Eric also said that examination of the budget showed that salaries were slated to increase by more than 7 percent in this document when step raises and cost-of-living increases were added together.

Patrick expressed the opinion that the Finance Committee should ask all departments to keep budget increase at 3 percent or less. He also questioned the wisdom of debating details of the school budget that are outside the purview of the Finance Committee.

Russ Greco said the state and national economy are relatively stagnant and that the town cannot realistically expect large amounts of new funding from the state this year.

The committee eventually agreed to adopt the 3-percent increase standard. Eric agreed to communicate this to the school officials and others.

At 8:05 the committee adjourned to the joint meeting with the selectmen and school officials. It was agreed at that session to try to meet again with the school officials on March 13 when the state revenue picture is clearer.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.

*A precise text of the comment is available from the chairman or secretary upon formal request from authorized parties.