

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Nov. 22, 2005
Shutesbury Town Hall

Meeting jointly with the selectmen, Becky Torres, chairwoman and Debra Pichanik. Finance Committee members present: Eric Stocker, chairman, Al Beswick, Al Springer, Lori Tuominen and Patrick J. Callahan. Guests: David Dann, town administrator, Dan Hayes, School Committee, Ken Holmberg, assessors, Leslie Bracebridge, town clerk.

The meeting convened at 7:07 p.m.

The selectmen voted to keep a single tax rate for the coming year. Ken Holmberg says the new rate will be \$17.30 per \$1,000 of evaluation.

In a discussion about the proposal to have the four towns in the regional school system adopt a new funding formula, Eric and Becky, who were on the exploratory committee reviewing the issues, explained that a general consensus existed to return to the original 1965 formula which is based on a per pupil cost with a rolling five-year average for each town. Under this plan, Shutesbury would save \$156,168 for the fiscal 2006 budget cycle, the one we are currently in. Becky says this formula was the one based most on equity. They also say the state Department of Education is likely to come up with a new funding formula in the future to replace the 1993 formula that education reform legislation required. When that happens, however, isn't known.

The two committees agreed to jointly recommend a return to the 1965 formula. Patrick made, and later withdrew a motion, saying that if that formula was rejected, the town's representative should support other formulas that are more advantageous to the town. A motion directing the town representatives to support the 1965 formula and failing that to back the aggregate wealth formula was unanimously approved.

The selectmen adjourned and the Finance Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the Oct. 11 meeting.

The committee reviewed the expense report.

David Dann reported that he has begun to draft a new budget and has added a line item for information technology.

A motion was made and approved unanimously to transfer \$2,000 from the Finance Committee reserve to pay for the upcoming audit.

The next meeting was set for Dec. 20, 2005.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.

