

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for April 25, 2006
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Eric Stocker, chairman, Al Beswick, Al Springer, Rus Wilson, Lori Tuominen and Patrick J. Callahan. Guests: David Dann, town administrator, Rebecca Torres and Debra Pichanick, Joseph Jacobs, selectmen. Michael Bloomfield, town moderator, Leslie Bracebridge, town clerk and David Keilson, town accountant.

The meeting convened at 7:10 p.m.

The minutes of the April 11 approved unanimously as amended.

The first part of the meeting was with the selectmen, town clerk , town accountant and the moderator to discuss the budget.

Eric and Lori reported that the Capital Planning Committee recommended borrowing \$75,000 with \$30,000 to be used for the Building Committee for repairs and renovations bringing the budget for that panel to \$56,000. They also recommended boosting the library building fund to \$2,000.

Deb Pichanick asked what kind of dump truck is being purchased and David Dann replied that it was a replacement for the existing truck. Deb also asked if library trust funds could be used for repairs.

Eric reported that overall, the town's debt service shows that the amount borrowed is declining.

Al Beswick says at a meeting on the regional school budget, Alice Carlozzi, chairwoman of the Amherst Finance Committee told him the Amherst budget contains some funds for "nice things," a comment he says means Amherst is living beyond its means. He also noted that Leverett and Shutesbury have agreed to pay an extra \$62,000 for the regional budget on a one-year basis to help with budget pressure.

Becky says Leverett and Shutesbury were hoping to use the leverage of the extra funding to coax Amherst to boost its school funding, but instead there is budget chaos in Amherst. Becky predicted that budget cuts at the regional level would cause dramatic changes in the educational program. She says the overall education policy at the state level remains murky.

At this point a motion was made by Al Beswick to support the town budget proposal as presented. It contains a deficit of \$159,000 that will be covered by free cash. Patrick seconded the motion and the Finance Committee unanimously approved it.

Becky says the budget proposal is based on state aid figures from the governor's budget and those could change before the budget is finalized.

Deb and Joe say they are leaning toward delaying consideration of the budget until June when the state budget picture is clearer. There was a lengthy discussion about this plan and how to organize the articles on the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

The Finance Committee then moved upstairs and gave its approval to articles 4,5,6,8,9,10.

Patrick made a motion to ask the selectmen to postpone the budget articles until June 6.

The next meeting was set for May 23 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.