

**SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes for June 2, 2009**  
**Shutesbury Town Hall**

Members present: Eric Stocker, chairman, Rus Wilson, Patrick J. Callahan, Lori Tuominen, Bill Wells and Elaine Puleo. Guests: David Dann, town administrator, Weezie Houle, potential Finance Committee member; Al Springer and Ralph Armstrong, selectmen and Becky Torres, town administrator designee.

The meeting convened at 7:07 p.m.

Eric recounted how he, Lori and Bill had attended a meeting of the Union 28 School Committee in Erving and discussed three major points. The Shutesbury contingent raised questions about why the union had hired a part-time curriculum director that hadn't been indicated in the budget and says they were told it was a one-year, .4 FTE position funded using development funds from the member schools. Eric said he made the point to them that Shutesbury officials believe they have a right to know about such hires in advance, especially when budgets are under significant stress.

Eric said there was also a discussion about another, possibly full-time job for a special education consultant that was to be created and funded using federal stimulus money. Again, the Shutesbury delegation asked why this new position was needed.

Finally, Eric said he made the point that the Shutesbury Finance Committee and selectmen have in recent years been putting pressure on the local school committee to restrain its budget, including making a .5 percent cut in the final weeks leading up to Annual Town Meeting to balance next years spending plan. With this in mind it is important that the Union 28 budget be more transparent, that large raises not be granted and that administrative costs be controlled because any significant increase in the union budget essentially subtracts funds from the local school budget.

Overall, the Finance Committee agreed it is important to closely watch the Union 28 budget and get as much information as possible as early as possible in the next funding cycle.

Patrick reported that the police negotiations were still underway, and Elaine said work was also still continuing on the teacher contract.

David Dann said the regional school budget was unresolved. He also reported that LFNAC has hired the firm of D.A. Sullivan as a project manager on the library project. He said they have agreed to be paid \$7,200 for Phase I in determining a site for a new library and hiring an architect. It was noted they build the existing library.

The minutes of April 7 and 21 were approved unanimously.

David Dann explained the budget adjustment required to make final adjustments in the fiscal 2009 budget. Overall there it is necessary to cover a total of \$69,482.52 for overspent account or unpaid bills. It was agreed to transfer small amounts from various accounts for a total of \$19,832 to cover part of that total, and to use \$16,971.49 from the Finance Committee reserve for another portion. This means that about \$30,000 will be covered from those two sources and the remaining \$39,223 can be transferred at a special Town Meeting in the fall. The committee agreed to this procedure.

The Finance committee then reviewed the expense report from June 3, 2009 and also reviewed the revenue report.

David Dann estimated the town will have about \$9,000 in left over revenue from fiscal 2009.

Al Springer reported that Walter Tibbetts is applying for a federal grant to pay for about half of the cost of a generator to be located at the elementary school.

The committee discussed actions that should be taken in the next budget cycle. It was agreed that the selectmen and Finance Committee should seek a meeting of the Union 28 towns and to get an earlier review of the union's budget drafting process.

It was also agreed to inform town departments that budget number might require adjustment right up to Annual Town Meeting as happened this year. The School Committee had expressed unhappiness that their budget was in flux right up to Annual Town Meeting, and they tried to get voters to restore the final \$8,510 cut that was made, but that effort failed. The prospect that next year could be as bad or worse than the current year should be explained to town departments so they know that budgets may need changes if circumstances warrant.

It was also agreed to ask Union 28 for its final expense report and supporting budget documents for the current year.

The committee supported having Finance Committee minutes for the past several years sent to the Web committee for timely posting and setting up a system for getting current minutes posted on the town Web site. Patrick has electronic copies of minutes but hasn't been forwarding them to the Webmaster.

Weezie Houle said she wants to join the Finance Committee.

The next meeting was set for July 7 at 6:30 p.m. with the selectmen to discuss how to proceed for the next year. The Finance Committee also has to reorganize because Eric and Elaine have left to join the Board of Selectmen. New members will be appointed and a new chairman has to be chosen.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.  
Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.