

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Sept. 30, 2004
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Chairman Eric Stocker, Al Beswick, Patrick J. Callahan and Lori Tuominen. Guests David Ames, town administrator, Joe Jacobs and Becky Torres, selectmen, Leslie Bracebridge, town clerk, and Al Springer.

The meeting convened at 7:04 p.m.

Al Beswick reported that the School Committee is returning \$66,000 to the general fund that was unspent last year. He also reported that the committee is revamping its policies and that recent MCAS scores were very low.

Patrick and Becky reported on the Police Study Committee activities. Becky noted that some language in the police chief's contract may be changed before a replacement for Charlie Bray is hired.

Eric says the Personnel Board has had little recent activity.

Becky told the committee that the O-32 parcel, also known as the Taylor property, now belongs to the town.

Patrick moved, and Eric seconded a motion to make public closed session minutes of meetings regarding the purchase of the Taylor property. The motion passed unanimously.

Highway Superintendent Tim Hunting arrived and asked the Finance Committee to increase funding for the highway materials line item by \$5,000. He outlined current spending from that line item and explained how the police details are paid by the town. He says if the additional money is approved, he will have enough to finish the rest of the year without having to ask for more. A motion to move the funds from the Finance Committee reserve to the highway materials line item was made and seconded and approved unanimously.

David Ames asked for a transfer of \$2,036 to pay for veteran's benefits. Patrick moved approval and the motion was passed unanimously.

There was a discussion about whether and how much money to use from the free cash account to offset property taxes in light of the override and unexpected funds in free cash. Al and Patrick argued for using \$100,000, a round number that would be meaningful to the town residents. Joe noted that the regional school budget is a mess this year and committee members agreed. However, Patrick moved to use \$100,000 to lower property taxes and Al seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. The amount will be put on a warrant for special Town Meeting on Oct. 12 for voters to approve.

Patrick also moved to use \$56,000 from free cash to pay for roof repairs and building renovations on town buildings. Lori seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

The next meeting was set for Oct. 19 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at around 9 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.