

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Sept. 9, 2008
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Eric Stocker, chairman, Mark Pocsik, Elaine Puleo, Lori Tuominen, Bill Wells and Patrick J. Callahan. Guests: David Dann, town administrator; Al Springer, Ralph Armstrong, Becky Torres, selectman; Leslie Bracebridge, secretary to the selectmen.

The meeting convened at 7:11 p.m.

The minutes of the July 23 meeting were approved unanimously.

Eric was re-elected as committee chair and Patrick agreed to be the secretary for another year.

In response to a question, Becky reported there have been some complaints that the Leverett-Cooleyville-Prescott road project has left the road too narrow. She says walkers and bicyclists have raised this issue.

David reported that Lake Wyola is being drawn down and the goal is to have repairs made to the dam done by Thanksgiving.

David also says the Energy Committee has found that small wind turbines are not living up to expectations and because the proposed site for a turbine behind Town Hall is marginal to begin with, the committee is no longer considering erecting a turbine there. The committee instead is focusing on conservation efforts to save energy. There will be a hearing Oct. 2 at the Elementary School to discuss energy conservation efforts in town, David says. The town is on a list for a comprehensive energy audit and this will serve as the basis for the Energy Committee's future plans.

David also says the \$15,000 approved by Town Meeting for the wind turbine project was solely for that use, so those funds will become available for other projects. He also says there will be a small addition built onto the highway garage and installation of a new roof for the main structure that will be heavily insulated. These two measures should boost energy conservation for that department.

Becky says overall she wants to see the town adopt a long-term plan to save energy with the eventual goal of getting town buildings off the energy grid. She says saving energy means saving money, so it's important to identify capital projects that will help conserve energy and money. Becky says a biomass project for the school and making sure that when a new library is built it is totally off the grid are good places to start.

The two boards then launched a discussion of how to include energy conservation into this year's budget deliberations. It was eventually decided that Eric will draft a letter to town department asking that non-salary budget increases be held at 2.75 percent this year

and that special consideration be given to projects and capital expenditures that save energy for both the long and short term. The idea is to raise the issue of energy conservation at the most basic level of town services while developing a long-term policy to reduce budget increases to prevent future overrides.

David then distributed a sheet showing expenses to date for the gasoline cleanup at the Fire Station. As of this time, \$28,942.56 has been spent or is expected to be spent, including \$2,891 for work done by W.W. Clark, \$80.28 for sand and gravel, \$7,000 for the licensed site professional, \$3,000 for lab work, and \$13,000 for hauling away the contaminated soil by our DPW crew. David says costs are sure to rise and that by the time of the scheduled special Town Meeting on Oct.28, better figures will be available.

David distributed a preliminary analysis of free cash that shows the town is likely to add about \$130,000 in free cash this year. Final figure haven't been calculated or certified by the state. Overall, Gail Weiss, town accountant, estimates the town will have about \$484,423.34 in free cash this year once the calculations are finalized.

The committee reviewed the 9/10/08 expense report.

The committee also reviewed the meeting schedule for the fall.

The next meeting was set for Sept. 23, the all-boards meeting. A Finance Committee meeting will be posted in case any action is required at that time.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.