

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Feb. 4, 2004
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Chairman Eric Stocker, Al Beswick, Patrick J. Callahan. Guests present: David Ames, Russ Greco, possible new Finance Committee member, Charlie Bray, police chief, Joseph Jacobs, selectmen.

The meeting convened at 7:05 p.m.

The committee met with Charlie Bray, police chief on his proposed budget. Charlie said he added \$1,000 to last year's number to meet inflation. He said cruiser maintenance is currently at \$52 per hour and asked what the town's plans are to replace his fleet thorough the capital planning process. Charlie said cruiser fuel has been increased by \$500 to reflect rising gasoline prices. There was discussion of the viability of reducing cruiser expenses from \$11,000 to \$10,000. Charlie said that can be done, but to replace a new cruiser is about \$26,000, and if there are unexpected expenses, he will return to the Finance Committee for funds. Charlie also said it is not the age of the cruiser, but its miles that make a difference.

Charlie also noted that the original plan was to replace a cruiser every five years, and that has now slipped to every six, or more, years. He said the four-wheel drive cruiser is very helpful in the snow.

Charlie added that the police may be getting new radios through a WMLAC grant. He suggested savings through regional cooperation.

David Ames said the ambulance bill has arrived and been paid.

The committee reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting, and approved them.

Discussion moved to the regional school budget. David Ames said the superintendent has suggested a nearly 10 percent increase and that will have a large impact on the small towns. David also mentioned that the high school roof will need to be replaced.

Eric mentioned that Gabe Voelker had refinanced a school loan at a good rate saving the town \$40,000.

There was a discussion of how various formulas will affect the regional school budget line item.

There was also a discussion of the role of the Capital Planning Committee this year.

Russ Greco agreed to join the Finance Committee. He will need to get sworn in by Leslie.

Patrick agreed to write a new letter of support for the Shutesbury-Leverett Broadband Committee.

There was a discussion on whether to give a line item to the ADA committee.

Next meeting set for March 2 with the tax collector and assessors.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.