

Shutesbury Finance Committee Minutes November 15, 2016
Shutesbury Town Hall, 7pm

Members Present: Elaine Puleo, Bob Groves, Jim Hemingway, George Arvanitis and Eric Stocker **Members Absent:** Weezie Houle & Jim Walton

1. Meeting called to order at 7:10
2. Approved pay increase for Doug Smith, one step, \$.55 per hour from \$18.35 to \$18.90 for attaining his Hoisting License, retroactive to when he received his license on February 23, 2016.
3. Appointed Elaine Puleo to be Finance Committee representative to the Police Chief contract Negotiations
4. Police Chief regarding the FY18 Police Budget:
 - Latest police contract provides additional (\$50/month) stipend for cell phones. The officers are not required to buy a phone dedicated to town use only. \$1,200
 - Two \$600 stipends (paid twice per year) for officers assigned as evidence officer
 - The contract also pays officers for unused Holiday time
 - Budget request includes \$2,400 for stipends and \$5,000 for holiday time pay out
 - Next negotiations in a year. Finance Committee asked that changes be made to decrease cost of phones for officers and assignment of officers
 - Salary increase of 18% from FY 2017 seems too high given no significant staffing\scheduling changes. Chief will recalculate the salary and submit an updated salary line request to the Finance Committee.
 - Police Chief entitled to same benefits as officers (under their contract)
 - FY 2017 vehicle maintenance line will go over budget with two big repairs to the 2011 cruiser and the recently purchased SUV
5. Meeting with Selectboard:
 - Discussion regarding cash reserves:
 1. Discussion regarding need for cash reserves at the current level
 2. Need to fund OEPB to satisfy bond rating agencies. Treasurer noted that OPEB unfunded liability is now \$2,096,803. She also noted that the bond rating agencies have stated that token funding of OPEB is not acceptable and that towns must lower their unfunded liabilities substantially in order to maintain good credit ratings. The Finance Committee will consider recommending funding a portion of this liability from cash reserves
 3. Cash will allow us to fund a portion of broadband infrastructure
 4. There is no debt service capacity in the operating budget and won't be for the next few years. Near future mid-level capital purchases will need to be paid from cash reserves (i.e. police cruisers and Elementary school items)
 5. The Visioning process could result in other capital needs for the town that would be appropriate for funding from cash reserves

- Discussed Amherst Regional Assessment Working Group. There's been little progress towards a new method and no agreement on what to use for FY 2018
 - Regional Capital Planning Working Group: There have been no meetings
 - Four Town Meeting (Amherst Regional High Schools):
 1. Meeting moved to December 17th
 2. Discussed Shutesbury's position regarding the assessment method and the funding of the FY 2018 budget
 3. Shutesbury will insist that a new method be agreed upon before the annual town meeting in May 2017
6. Approved a \$11,252.50 Finance Committee reserve fund transfer to the legal expense budget line for a legal bill related to the solar project
 7. Adjourned: 9:15
 8. Next Meeting: December 1, 2016
 9. Upcoming Meetings
 - a. December 15, 2016, 7pm, Fire Dept., 7:15pm
 - b. December 17, 2016, 9am, Middle School
 - c. January 10, 2017, 7pm, School Committee, Select Board, 7:15pm
 - d. January 26, 2017, 7pm, Financial Dept Heads, Tax Collector, 7:15pm
 - e. February 9, 2017, 7:15 Highway Dept, Amherst Regional Budget, 8pm
 - f. February 23, 2017, 7pm, Capital Planning, ,7:15pm
 - g. March 9, 2016, 7pm, Personnel Board, 7:15pm
 - h. March 23, 2016, 7pm
 - i. April 6, 2016, 7pm, Final Budget, Warrant voting
 - j. April 20, 2016, 7pm, Prep for Town Meeting
 - k. May 6, 2016, 8:30am, Town Meeting
 - l. June 8, 2016, 7pm