

**Shutesbury Finance Committee**  
**Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Virtual (Zoom) Meeting**

Members Present: Jim Hemingway, Ajay Khashu, Jim Walton, Susie Mosher, Bob Groves, George Arvanitis

Members Absent: Melody Chartier

Non-Members present: Becky Torres, Walter Tibbets (Fire), Mary Anne Antonellis (Library), Rebecca Gilliam, Melanie DeSilva, [Gjdevito@gmail.com](mailto:Gjdevito@gmail.com), Savanna Ouellette, Ella (She/Her)

7:05 pm Finance Committee Call to Order

- 1) Motion to approve 11/17 minutes as amended passes unanimously (5-0).**
- 2) Motion to approve 12/1 minutes as amended passes unanimously (5-0).**
- 3) Budget Review – Fire Department (represented by Fire Chief Walter Tibbets)
  - The Department has submitted a level-services budget.
  - The following budget lines are funded at the same amounts as was included in the FY21 budget:
    - i) Operating, Maintenance, Equipment, SCBA Air Tanks, Fire Hose Replacement, Turnout Gear Replacement.
  - JH asks for an update on the emergency communication system.
    - i) Massachusetts is in the process of building a statewide system that will provide radio communications for public safety and transportation agencies throughout the Commonwealth.
    - ii) This project is referred to as The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Interoperable Radio System (CoMIRS).
    - iii) The cost for Franklin county towns of joining CoMIRS would be considerably less than the cost of rebuild the county's current system. If towns elected to rebuild their own system, user fees would likely increase 3-fold.
    - iv) Under CoMirs, the state is buying radios for the towns. Between Shutesbury's Police and Fire departments, the value of these radios is in the range of \$70-\$80K. Most radios for Franklin County towns will be ordered by beginning of May.
    - v) For the first 3 years Shutesbury will have an MOA that guarantees we will not have any user service fees.
    - vi) The coverage will be comparable to what we have now and will improve during Phase 2 of the build when the digital network is implemented. The Chief reports that coverage and clarity of communication will be improved.
  - Maintenance budget is largely an unknown because we don't know what repairs will be required.
  - SM asks for staffing update
    - i) Our current staffing level is at 11 (4 are probationary).
    - ii) Within the past few months, the department has had 5 new applications, but only one net increase member.
  - No capital requests for FY22

- # of calls have dropped this year. Most likely because people were reluctant to call for an ambulance for minor injuries.
- 4) Budget Review – Library Department (represented by Library Director Mary Anne Antonellis)
- The state has a certification process for town libraries.
    - i) Certification provides many benefits. It allows library members to use any other certified library in the state.
    - ii) As a condition of the certification process, the library's appropriated budget has to increase by 2.5% over the average budget during the prior 3-year period. The only way out of this commitment is to submit a waiver request.
    - iii) This year, we need \$866 to satisfy this requirement. The draft budget has added this amount to the Operating Allocation.
    - iv) To maintain certification, libraries have to remain open a certain # of hours. State is waiving that request this year due to COVID.
  - The department is running approximately 10 programs per week. These programs service everyone from children to senior citizens. These programs are partially funded through grants.
  - The library would like to add \$2000 to the Operating budget to build a more sustainable approach to funding library programming.
  - Digital circulation is up. Physical circulation is down. Our library has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest circulation for small towns in Mass.
  - BT points out that the library budget already includes an increase of approximately \$3,400 revenue from Friends of the Library.
  - Antonellis points out that while COVID has caused economic harm, it has increased need for services.
  - There are new expenses because of COVID. Including an online scheduling system, Zoom Account, and online marketing fees.
  - Broadband's impact on library: More online resources, video streaming services, access to digital services.
  - BG states his view that all Shutesbury departments should strive to level-fund or reduce their budgets for FY22 given the uncertainties of COVID.
- 5) State Budget Updates
- Certification of current free cash reserves = \$1,378,767
  - Chapter 70 school aid and UGA funds came in as expected.
  - No timeline on FY22 numbers. There is hope the governor will put something out in January.
  - We will spend 15 minutes at our next meeting having BT demonstrate how to interpret the FY21 preliminary Cherry Sheet estimates.
  - CARES act spending has been used for 20 new desks, computers/iPads. 2 new water filling stations.
  - The latest school budget includes a reduction in rent expenses for the U28 regional administration. Those staff have been distributed across members schools.
- 6) Discussion of 12/10/2020 expense report
- AK asks question about potential school transportation savings.
- 7) Future meetings

- December 29<sup>th</sup>: Cherry Sheet demonstration, 4-town Meeting Prep
- January 12<sup>th</sup>: Elementary School budget review

Meeting Adjourned at 9:29PM

## Attachment A: Fire Department Budget Request



**Shutesbury  
Fire Department**  
P.O. Box 295  
42 Leverett Road  
Shutesbury, MA 01072  
(413) 259-1211  
Fax (413) 259-3795  
E-mail [firedpt@shutesbury.org](mailto:firedpt@shutesbury.org)  
E-mail [shutesburyfd@verizon.net](mailto:shutesburyfd@verizon.net)



Fire Chief  
Walter R. Tibbetts

### Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Proposal

|                                  | <u>Requested Level:</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Operating:</b>                | <b>\$7,100.00</b>       |
| <b>Maintenance:</b>              | <b>\$11,000.00</b>      |
| <b>Equipment:</b>                | <b>\$7,000.00</b>       |
| <b>SCBA Air Tanks:</b>           | <b>\$2,000.00</b>       |
| <b>Fire Hose Replacement:</b>    | <b>\$2,000.00</b>       |
| <b>Turnout Gear Replacement:</b> | <b>\$4,400.00</b>       |
| <b>Total:</b>                    | <b>\$33,500.00</b>      |

**No Capital Requests For Fiscal Year 2022**

Attachment B: Town Library Budget Request

|    | A  | B                      | C                      | D                      | E                      | F                      | G                                  |
|----|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY BUDGET FY22</b>                                 |                        |                        |                        |                        |                        |                                    |
| 2  | <b>EXPENDITURES</b>  | <b>Actual<br/>FY17</b> | <b>Actual<br/>FY18</b> | <b>Actual<br/>FY19</b> | <b>Actual<br/>FY20</b> | <b>Budget<br/>FY21</b> | <b>Draft<br/>Budget 1<br/>FY22</b> |
| 3  | Director's Salary  | 41,178                 | 41,811                 | 42,856                 | 44,141                 | 45,466                 | 45,466                             |
| 4  | Assistant/Aide's Salaries  | 15,073                 | 15,831                 | 16,227                 | 16,714                 | 17,215                 | 17,215                             |
| 5  | Longevity  |                        |                        |                        |                        |                        |                                    |
| 6  | <b>Total Salaries</b>  | <b>56,251</b>          | <b>57,642</b>          | <b>59,083</b>          | <b>60,855</b>          | <b>62,681</b>          | <b>62,681</b>                      |
| 7  | Acquisitions   | 14,351                 | 15,526                 | 15,838                 | 18,562                 | 16,990                 | 17,086                             |
| 8  | Serials  | 1,016                  | 1,020                  | 970                    | 2,136                  | 1,000                  | 1,000                              |
| 9  | Office Supplies  | 2,890                  | 2,449                  | 3,555                  | 3,122                  | 3,000                  | 3,000                              |
| 10 | C/W MARS   | 5,322                  | 6,031                  | 6,174                  | 5,939                  | 5,498                  | 5,500                              |
| 11 | Programs   | 8,000                  | 10,000                 | 17,072                 | 18,000                 | 16,000                 | 16,000                             |
| 12 | Misc   |                        |                        |                        |                        |                        |                                    |
| 13 | Professional Development   |                        |                        |                        |                        | 500                    | 500                                |
| 14 | Technology Planning  | 1,500                  |                        |                        |                        |                        |                                    |
| 15 | <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>  | <b>89,330</b>          | <b>92,668</b>          | <b>102,692</b>         | <b>108,614</b>         | <b>105,669</b>         | <b>105,767</b>                     |
| 16 | <b>REVENUES</b>  |                        |                        |                        |                        |                        |                                    |
| 17 | ATM Salary Allocation  | 56,251                 | 58,141                 | 59,083                 | 60,855                 | 62,681                 | 62,681                             |
| 18 | ATM Operating Allocation   | 13,666                 | 14,051                 | 14,898                 | 16,974                 | 16,990                 | 17,856                             |
| 19 | <b>ATM Total</b>   | <b>69,917</b>          | <b>72,192</b>          | <b>73,981</b>          | <b>77,829</b>          | <b>79,671</b>          | <b>80,537</b>                      |
| 20 | Dog Tax  | 1,367                  | 1,166                  | 1,660                  | 1,245                  | 1,000                  | 1,000                              |
| 21 | Revolving Fund   |                        | 1,386                  | 2,697                  | 2,684                  | 1,500                  | 500                                |
| 22 | State Aid  | 4,089                  | 2,000                  | 2,500                  | 3,349                  | 2,500                  | 2,500                              |
| 23 | SLN Grant  | 2,450                  | 2,200                  | 2,200                  | 2,500                  | 2,660                  | 2,500                              |
| 24 | Library Trust Fund   | 1,000                  | 1,000                  | 1,000                  | 1,000                  | 1,000                  | 1,000                              |
| 25 | LCC  | 1,500                  | 1,400                  | 2,790                  | 1,500                  | 1,500                  | 1,500                              |
| 26 | LSTA/IMLS/NSA Grants   | 1,000                  | 2,000                  | 1,500                  | 5,500                  | 4,500                  | 1,000                              |
| 27 | Com. Net. Children   | 2,100                  | 2,100                  | 2,100                  | 1,080                  | 1,080                  | 1,080                              |
| 28 | Friends of M.N. Spear  | 5,507                  | 4,324                  | 7,021                  | 7,677                  | 7,258                  | 10,650                             |
| 29 | Recreation Committee   |                        | 200                    | 700                    | 750                    |                        |                                    |
| 30 | Council on Aging   | 400                    | 2,700                  | 4,543                  | 3,500                  | 3,000                  | 3,500                              |
| 31 | <b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>  | <b>89,330</b>          | <b>92,668</b>          | <b>102,692</b>         | <b>108,614</b>         | <b>105,669</b>         | <b>105,767</b>                     |
| 32 | <b>Capital Planning: New Library Capital Building Fund - \$25,000 request.</b> |                        |                        |                        |                        |                        |                                    |

**Attachment C: Public comments sent to Finance Committee between December 4-9, 2020**

**From:** Leslie Luchonok <[leslieluchonok@gmail.com](mailto:leslieluchonok@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Regional School Assessment

**Date:** December 4, 2020 at 12:35:12 PM EST

**To:** Finance Committee <[fincom@shutesbury.org](mailto:fincom@shutesbury.org)>

Hi Jim,

I think you already know - or can pretty well guess - my position regarding the regional school assessment, for all the reasons that I and other residents have stated.

The most equitable and fair assessment formula is to move to 75% Statutory for FY22 and 100% for FY23.

Thanks for your consideration, and please share my comments with the FinCom.

Best regards, sincerely,

Leslie

Leslie Luchonok

61 West pelham Road

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jeff Lacy <[ruralplanningassociates@crocker.com](mailto:ruralplanningassociates@crocker.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Regional School Assessment

**Date:** December 4, 2020 at 2:25:11 PM EST

**To:** Leslie Luchonok <[leslieluchonok@gmail.com](mailto:leslieluchonok@gmail.com)>

**Cc:** Finance Committee <[fincom@shutesbury.org](mailto:fincom@shutesbury.org)>

My position is same. Let's continue toward 100% Statutory (with five year rolling average). Burden should not be placed on taxpayers in least wealthy town.

Thank you,

Jeff Lacy

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [mpvinskey@verizon.net](mailto:mpvinskey@verizon.net)

**Subject:** Four Town Meeting

**Date:** December 4, 2020 at 11:02:58 AM EST

**To:** "[fincom@shutesbury.org](mailto:fincom@shutesbury.org)" <[fincom@shutesbury.org](mailto:fincom@shutesbury.org)>,

"[sullivans@shutesburyschool.org](mailto:sullivans@shutesburyschool.org)" <[sullivans@shutesburyschool.org](mailto:sullivans@shutesburyschool.org)>,

"[selectboard@shutesbury.org](mailto:selectboard@shutesbury.org)" <[selectboard@shutesbury.org](mailto:selectboard@shutesbury.org)>

**Reply-To:** [mpvinskey@verizon.net](mailto:mpvinskey@verizon.net)

A Four Town meeting will take place on Saturday, December 5, 2020. One item on the agenda is the Regional Assessment method. Over the past several weeks I have watched the Finance committee attempt to formulate a position on moving forward to achieve the Statutory Method with a Five year rolling average. While it's not clear what their position is, the position of the Town of

Shutesbury needs to be that we expect in FY22 to be at the 75% point of achieving the Statutory method and in FY23 we expect to be at the 100% point.

Many years ago a working group spent the majority of the summer researching, analyzing, and evaluating alternative assessment methods. The group concluded the fairest assessment method-for all towns-was the Statutory method with a five year rolling average.

There is widespread support for this Statutory method by Shutesbury voters as evidenced by the Town Meeting vote in 2019 that brought Regional School officials, and officials from other towns to our meeting to see whether Shutesbury would approve the miniscule movement toward the Statutory method or vote to move immediately to the Statutory method. Voters backed down with a promise from Town officials to accelerate movement toward the Statutory method. That was two years ago and we are only at 45%. Now is the time to inform the other towns we expect to implement the Statutory method by FY23.

Michael Vinskey  
391 W Pelham Road  
Shutesbury, MA 01072

**From:** diane collari <[collari3333@yahoo.com](mailto:collari3333@yahoo.com)>

**Subject:** Town Budget 2021

**Date:** December 9, 2020 at 10:25:40 PM EST

**To:** "[fincom@shutesbury.org](mailto:fincom@shutesbury.org)" <[fincom@shutesbury.org](mailto:fincom@shutesbury.org)>,  
"[selectboard@shutesbury.org](mailto:selectboard@shutesbury.org)" <[selectboard@shutesbury.org](mailto:selectboard@shutesbury.org)>

**Cc:** Diane Collari <[collari3333@yahoo.com](mailto:collari3333@yahoo.com)>

**Reply-To:** "[collari3333@yahoo.com](mailto:collari3333@yahoo.com)" <[collari3333@yahoo.com](mailto:collari3333@yahoo.com)>

As you are working on the upcoming budget, I implore you to think about the impact your decisions make on the majority of residents in our town. It's not possible to ignore the fact that unemployment and reduction in income is devastating many households along with the pandemic.

I propose a moratorium on new spending and that every possible solution be seriously considered to lower our expenditures.

Give the Free Cash back to the taxpayers! Lower the tax rate with it. I don't want my money used to fund any shortfalls. I want a realistic, pared down budget. Do away with anything that is not essential. Last year you presented a pre-pandemic budget that was outrageous and the inability to adapt to the current conditions showed a lack of concern for the taxpayers. Do better in 2021.

Diane Collari  
Wendell Road