

Finance Committee School Choice Funding Sub-Committee August 16, 2021 @3:00 pm

Present: Bob Groves and Susie Mosher

Minutes from 8/2/2021 approved as amended.

Bob re-iterated that he sees the Finance Committee's job to review the budget proposals of all departments and endorse or debate them with the department and our committee. He used an example of reviewing an item in the Fire Department budget. Susie disagrees with this analogy in terms of reviewing the school budget due to the level of autonomy the school committee has.

Bob reported on his discussion with Bruce Turner. He did not reach any new clarification of School Choice revenue spending for SES.

We reviewed the research from Union 38, Hadley, and Amherst Regional Public schools that Susie gathered. These policies are all similar in that the choice funds are used either for specific, allowable projects, for staffing costs or school committee appropriate school choice funding into their spending plan at the level of revenue received in the previous year.

We agreed that these policies are fiscally prudent and we believe Shutesbury School Committee may agree. The school choice funding issue is relatively new to the town and the school committee, needed some further understanding and this information can move the process to the next step.

Our sub-committee will draft a short statement and when approved, we will send it with an information packet containing the other towns' policies to the Shutesbury Elementary School Officials (School Committee, Financial Director, Superintendent, and Principal). The information will be sent to the whole Finance Committee as well. Once the School Committee begins to meet again next month, we hope they will vote on a policy they can use for their FY23 draft budget which the Finance Committee receives in the late fall. If they want to meet with the Fin Com before that, we will be happy to do so.

When we reached the last agenda item of any, "Further questions raised," Bob voiced his concern about participating in the School Choice option at all. Susie suggested that this is not a Finance Committee concern, but one he can raise with the School Committee as a citizen.

Susie will draft the statement, Bob can offer his edits at the next, (unscheduled as yet) brief meeting, and we hope to send the information out shortly.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45