

**Shutesbury Finance Committee**  
**Wednesday, September 8, 2021, Virtual (Zoom) Meeting**

Members Present: Robert Groves, Jim Hemingway, Ajay Khashu, Jim Walton, Susie Mosher, Melody Chartier, George Arvanitis

Members Absent: none

Non-Members present: Becky Torres, Leslie Luchonok, Stephen Sullivan

Meeting called to order at 6:35

**1) Review Minutes from 8/10/2021**

- a) Corrections made to header and items 2D and 6A.
- b) **Motion to approve 8/10/2021 minutes as amended passes unanimously 7-0.**

**2) Review Regional School Committee draft letter**

- a) SM has drafted a letter to the Regional School Committee inquiring about the process for planning the FY23 regional assessment method.
- b) AK asks if we want to recommend that the Regional School Committee lead the process. He also recommends requesting an early start to the process.
- c) GA clarifies that we should recommend more time so that all parties are informed and well prepared to discuss the assessment formula.
- d) BT states there will continue to be Four Town Meetings but it is not clear if the regional assessment formula will be a topic for discussion during those meetings.
- e) Steve Sullivan says that the Amherst Regional School Committee's budget subcommittee is meeting tonight to discuss the regional assessment process. Steve Sullivan adds that there is a lot of frustration within the school committee about how the assessment negotiations have gone in the past. The Amherst Town Council still needs to be educated on the specifics of how the various assessment methods are calculated.
- f) **Motion to approve draft letter as amended by the Fin Com passes unanimously 7-0.** The Select Board and School Committee will review the letter before it is sent to the region.

**3) Update from School Choice Funding Sub-Committee**

- a) BG and SM have collected a significant amount of information from area towns to learn about how they use School Choice revolving funds to support their annual budget.
- b) SM reports that Dan Hayes has indicated that the Shutesbury School Committee has started the process of articulating principles that will guide their use of school choice funds. The School Committee will draft a policy that clarifies how these funds will be used. SM suggests that the sub-committee forward the results of this research to the school committee to help support the development of their policy.

- c) BG states that there was a small disagreement within the sub-committee regarding the role that the Finance Committee plays in this process. BG argues that the Fin Com should play a role in guiding how these funds are utilized.
  - d) GA asks if SM is comfortable communicating to the school committee that the Fin Com encourages the committee to develop a policy on how the school will utilize school choice funds and that we would like to see the policy when it is developed.
  - e) AK suggests the following change: “**All towns and their school committees use a portion of School Choice revolving fund to support their annual budget.**”
  - f) **BG makes a motion to draft a short statement to accompany the sub-committee’s research to share with the school committee. AK seconds. Motion passes unanimously 7-0.**
- 4) Town Revenue/Expense, Long Range Modeling/Forecasts (Review Becky’s long-range model)**
- a) Topic postponed to next meeting. Modeling document is not ready to discuss.
- 5) Expense Report Review**
- a) Miscellaneous questions
- 6) Committee Updates**
- a) Police study group is meeting tomorrow.
  - b) JH: Towns are working on the backup system.
- 7) Future Meetings**
- a) September 22<sup>nd</sup>. We may move our regular meeting night to Wednesdays (through Dec 7) to accommodate a conflict in MC’s schedule.
    - i) Long range model/forecast
    - ii) Review budget request letter

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM