

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Wednesday, November 3, 2021, Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Members Absent: Melody Chartier

Town Administrator: Becky Torres

Non-Members present: Rita Farrell

Meeting called to order at 6:31

1) Review Minutes from 10/20/2021

- a) **Motion to approve 10/20/2021 minutes as amended passes unanimously 6-0.**

2) ARPA and CARES funding updates

- a) CARES act spending has been closed out as of 10/29 (total allocation = \$154K). There was a little bit of money left over that was used to purchase equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings, including a TV monitor and an OWL conference phone system.
- b) The town has received half of our ARPA allocation (\$262,000).
- c) SM asks should the FinCom begin allowing members to attend in person if that is their preference. BT explains that we need to make sure the equipment is secured and attached to the wall before this can happen. This item will be revisited at a future meeting.
- d) AK suggests that we disseminate a fact sheet that lists all of our CARES and ARPA expenditures.
- e) BG asks if it has been determined whether the school HVAC project will be an allowable ARPA expenditure. BT confirms that it will be.
- f) JH says that the Broadband Committee is hoping to use approximately \$20K for the backup RING protection circuit project that has been discussed at prior meetings.
- g) Culvert project has been delayed until next year because National Grid has not moved the pole. Work has to be done between August and December. The town is clarifying with the contractor whether this will result in a change to the cost of the project.

3) Fire Department Future Committee

- a) Walter Tibbets is resigning next year. The town is creating a committee to discuss future plans for how Shutesbury's fire department will be structured. JW will represent the Fin Com on this committee.

4) School Choice Funding

- a) Principal submitted a chart detailing how the school committee intends to utilize school choice funds for FY22 and FY23.
- b) The chart includes \$140K for FY22.
- c) GA says that it would be useful to see if the school committee has developed a policy that will guide how these decisions are made in the future.

- d) BG states that these funds are not meant to be discretionary funds that the school can just use however they want. It needs to be reviewed by the Finance Committee. BG states that the school choice funds should be used to support the budget.
- e) AK states that the proposed expenditures represent a mix of items that would be expected in a typical school budget – such as ESL teacher and paraeducator – and items that are non-recurring, such as an Academic Interventionist to support students’ recovery needs. This is exactly what the Fin Com has encouraged the school committee to do. We should be pleased with this result.
- f) GA asks if the school committee can spend school choice funds for the FY22 expenditures without a town vote. BT says she can check with the town accountant.

5) Other Items

- a) JW asks if our free cash has been certified. BT reports that our Free Cash has been certified at \$1,173,772. This is higher than expected (approx. \$250K more than anticipated). [The actual amount is approximately \$380K more than anticipated.] There were some additional revenues that have come in. Police chief left four months early so his salary was not paid.
- b) Our accountant will conduct an analysis to account for the difference.

6) Expense Report Review (11/4/2021)

7) Committee Updates

- a) GA for Personnel Board: Board has been reviewing salaries for all town employees. We are coming up with a list of positions which have salaries that are out of sync with other towns. Will possibly bring recommendations for salary increases for those positions. There are discussions with our Treasurer about training him on the assistant collector responsibilities. He will be Ellen’s back up.
- b) SM for School Committee: \$30K of rural aid was applied for teacher salaries. \$20K of funds was returned to town. School is getting a new custodian. Doug Slaughter said he is planning for a 4-town meeting in November. Committee is reviewing our current substitute pay.
- c) BG for Building Committee: Hoping to have the slider installed at the elementary school during Thanksgiving break

8) Future Meetings

- a) November 17th – 6:30PM

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM

Attachment A: Proposed School Choice Expenditures

Shutesbury Elementary School

Ideas/Usage of School Choice Funds

FY22

Funds Being Used For:	Amount of Funds	Purpose/Explanation
.6 FTE/ ESL Teacher	\$ 44,602	To support the legal need for ESL services for 2 students who are in the country for 1 year (not a long term position)
1.0 FTE/ 1 Year Academic Interventionist	\$ 71,500	To support all SES students with academic recovery skills due to learning loss during the pandemic (not a long term position)
1.0FTE/ Paraeducator-1 year	\$ 24,470	To support a student need documented in an IEP.

FY23

Funds Being Used For:	Amount of Funds	Purpose/Explanation
1.0 FTE /1 Year Academic Interventionist	\$ 72,000	To support all SES students with academic recovery skills due to learning loss during the pandemic (not a long term position)
Nature's Classroom Expedition	\$10,000.00	To support the 5th and 6th grade students to attend a 2 night/3 day science/outdoor learning expedition at Nature's Classroom. https://www.naturesclassroom.org/

Total: \$222,572