

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, March 8, 2022, Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Members Absent: Jim Walton

Select Board Members Present: Rita Farrell, Melissa Makepeace-O'Neill, Eric Stocker

Personnel Board Members Present: Peg Ross, April Stein

Town Administrator: Becky Torres

Non-members Present: Mary Lou Conca, Mike Vinsky

Meeting called to order at 6:32 PM

- 1) Meet with PB and SB to review Market Wage and Salary Alignment for FY23 budget
 - a) GA shares the Personnel Committee's market alignment analysis and recommendations. The committee is recommending targeted wage increases for the following positions: Accountant, Administrative Assessor, Assessor Clerk, Collector, Equipment Operator (2), Librarian, Town Clerk, and Treasurer. In total, these adjustments amount to a \$31,169 increase to the FY23 budget. \$7,038 of that amount corresponds to already approved COLA increases for those employees.
 - b) JH asks if we have had difficulty hiring and retaining employees because of wage issues. BT responds that yes, this has come up in several cases including hiring equipment operators, land use clerk, etc.
 - c) SM stated that when the Broadband Committee proposed a salary increase for the MLP manager there was no significant discussion or concerns expressed. SM states we should be consistent and have some empathy for town employees.
 - d) BG responds that he was surprised that this issue was being discussed and by the size of the proposed increases. BG: I am thinking of the taxpayer and my primary consideration is the hardship that some taxpayers experience every year when paying their taxes.
 - e) AK responds to BG: GA and MC have shared several committee reports to Fin Com over the last several months indicating that the Personnel Committee was conducting a market analysis and that recommendations for salary and wage alignment would be made. This should not be a surprise to committee members.
 - f) GA states that it seems like this is creating a large budget increase but approximately. \$7k of it are COLA increases that these employees would be receiving anyway. So, we are only adding approximately \$25,000. GA: I think it is a good idea to look at the rate of pay of comparable towns.
 - g) JH states that the reference to Gayle Huntress' pay increase is not relevant because her workload is increasing substantially, and her salary is paid through subscriber fees rather than tax levy.
 - h) SM: I looked at the population figure for each of the towns included in the Personnel Board analysis. Population varies by town but there is some consistency in wages.

- i) AK asks if the Personnel Board approved this proposal unanimously. Melissa Makepeace-O'Neill responds that the committee voted unanimously to bring this proposal forward to the Select Board and Finance Committee.
 - j) **SM makes a motion that the Finance Committee accept the recommendations made by the Personnel Board regarding the proposed market alignment. AK seconds. Motion passes by a vote of 4-2 (GA, MC, AK, SM vote yes – BG and JH vote no).**
- 2) Motion to approve 2/22 meeting minutes as amended passes unanimously 6-0.**
- 3) FY23 budget review (new draft sent on 3/8/22)**
- a) Significant changes/updates to the FY23 expense budget:
 - i) Most of the salary lines have been updated but BT needs to do a final review. The current draft does not include the market alignment adjustments that were approved at tonight's meeting.
 - ii) Health insurance budget currently includes a \$33K increase. This is likely to be adjusted down as we get more information.
 - iii) **JH makes a motion to reduce the recreation committee budget from \$3,000 to \$1,000. BG seconds. The motion fails by a vote of 3-3 (GA, AK, SM vote no – JH, BG, MC vote yes).**
 - iv) GA asks if we should bump up our Town Vehicle Fuel line given the current increase in oil prices. BG suggests that look at our bid from FRCOG and decide whether we want to contract our fuel expense or wait until the summer to see if prices come down. BT reports that we have about \$7,000 of unspent funds that could help absorb some of the increase. Committee members to leave the line flat for now.
 - v) The budget does not currently include the COLA increases for unionized town employees. These employees will receive a 3% increase. This will amount to a \$3,800 increase.
 - vi) GA asks what recommendations have been made by the committee that has been discussing the hiring of a new fire chief. BG requests that the Personnel committee look into the job description for the new fire chief position.
 - vii) BG asks if we will be receiving an updated budget for the elementary school. BT will forward the latest school budget for discussion at our next meeting.
 - viii) GA asks if there is going to be debt service for the culvert. BT responds that we are not anticipating debt service for this budget because of project delays.
- 4) OPEB – Actuarial Update**
- a) BT will be sending out the OPEB actuarial report to committee members. We will meet with the study authors on March 22.
- 5) Committee Reports**
- a) BG for Capital Planning: The committee will be meeting on the 16th to vote on the various capital requests that have been made by town departments. The plan is for Capital Planning Committee members to attend the next Fin Com meeting to review any

approved requests. Fin Com will then deliberate and vote on these requests at its April 5th meeting.

6) Future Meetings

- a) Mar 22: OPEB, Timeline for budget process, Capital planning recommendations
- b) April 5: Capital requests

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM

Attachment A: Market Alignment Analysis

Market Alignment For FY 2023 March 2022

The purpose of the market alignment increases:

- i. Need to pay market value for employee retention
- ii. Need to pay market value to attract quality job applicants
- iii. Will need to pay market for replacements (retirements)
- iv. Saves cost of turnover
- v. Limited pool of labor for some specialized municipal positions
- vi. Many towns contract out for services (third party) for much higher rates (to cover benefits, admin costs and profit)
- vii. Current labor shortage
- viii. Last market alignment study was 2013
- ix. Total budget increase would be \$40,922 (before COLA) if increases matched the average rate for each position, instead of the \$24,131 proposed

Franklin County Towns - Excludes Greenfield, Montague and Orange

Positions	Hourly Rates										Franklin County Towns - Excludes Greenfield, Montague and Orange																										
	Whitcomb	North/West	Proposed + COLA	Hourly COLA Only	Proposed	Kiamesha	Proposed Annual Budget	Town's Local Avg Budget	Average Franklin Co	Avg without High/Low	Median	Lowest	Highest	Ashfield	Barnardston	Beckland	Chatham	Colrain	Conway	Erving	Gill	Hamply	Heath	Leverett	Lewiston	Monroe	New Salem	Northfield	Rowe	Shelburne	Southfield	Ware	Wareham	Whitaker			
Accountant	\$ 24.30	15.00	\$ 27.57	\$ 0.65	\$ 26.92	13.5%	\$ 2,551	\$ 8,977	\$ 35.81	\$ 35.86	\$ 35.86	\$ 23.91	\$ 47.60							\$ 46.16		\$ 47.60												\$ 23.91		\$ 25.55	
Administrative Assessor	\$ 22.24	20.00	\$ 27.33	\$ 0.64	\$ 26.69	22.9%	\$ 5,292	\$ 8,536	\$ 30.45	\$ 29.65	\$ 29.65	\$ 26.37	\$ 36.12							\$ 26.37	\$ 30.08																
Assessor Clerk (Includes Assistants)	\$ 19.87	15.00	\$ 22.22	\$ 0.52	\$ 21.70	11.8%	\$ 1,804	\$ 2,291	\$ 22.81	\$ 22.58	\$ 22.00	\$ 16.88	\$ 31.63	\$ 20.09	\$ 25.27	\$ 20.05	\$ 17.50			\$ 21.35		\$ 31.63	\$ 30.00			\$ 22.52	\$ 24.49	\$ 22.00	\$ 20.25	\$ 25.25	\$ 16.88	\$ 18.33	\$ 26.50				
Collector	\$ 25.78	15.00	\$ 27.65	\$ 0.65	\$ 27.00	7.2%	\$ 1,454	\$ 1,150	\$ 27.26	\$ 26.91	\$ 25.64	\$ 18.22	\$ 39.40	\$ 23.59	\$ 39.40	\$ 28.81				\$ 31.36	\$ 25.41	\$ 23.63	\$ 25.64	\$ 21.29													
Equipment Operator #1	\$ 21.21	40.00	\$ 23.23	\$ 0.54	\$ 22.69	9.5%	\$ 4,211	\$ 4,068	\$ 23.17	\$ 22.98	\$ 22.74	\$ 20.61	\$ 29.00	\$ 22.82	\$ 24.44	\$ 20.76	\$ 20.61	\$ 25.00	\$ 22.65	\$ 26.21	\$ 23.16	\$ 21.44	\$ 20.63	\$ 29.00			\$ 22.05	\$ 24.16	\$ 21.44	\$ 26.95	\$ 24.00	\$ 22.44	\$ 21.93	\$ 20.70	\$ 22.93		
Equipment Operator #2	\$ 21.21	40.00	\$ 23.23	\$ 0.54	\$ 22.69	9.5%	\$ 4,211	\$ 4,068	\$ 23.17	\$ 22.98	\$ 22.74	\$ 20.61	\$ 29.00	\$ 22.82	\$ 24.44	\$ 20.76	\$ 20.61	\$ 25.00	\$ 22.65	\$ 26.21	\$ 23.16	\$ 21.44	\$ 20.63	\$ 29.00			\$ 22.05	\$ 24.16	\$ 21.44	\$ 26.95	\$ 24.00	\$ 22.44	\$ 21.93	\$ 20.70	\$ 22.93		
Librarian	\$ 22.24	40.00	\$ 23.44	\$ 0.55	\$ 22.89	5.4%	\$ 2,493	\$ 2,988	\$ 23.68	\$ 23.46	\$ 23.21	\$ 17.24	\$ 33.54	\$ 24.49	\$ 23.64	\$ 20.47	\$ 17.24	\$ 24.92			\$ 23.55	\$ 22.38	\$ 21.68	\$ 27.00	\$ 18.48			\$ 23.32	\$ 27.15	\$ 23.49	\$ 25.48	\$ 23.54	\$ 20.56	\$ 20.88	\$ 22.93		
Town Clerk	\$ 21.27	25.00	\$ 25.21	\$ 0.59	\$ 24.62	18.6%	\$ 5,129	\$ 4,657	\$ 24.85	\$ 24.69	\$ 23.96	\$ 18.00	\$ 34.02	\$ 22.15	\$ 18.00	\$ 19.24	\$ 24.80	\$ 22.12	\$ 29.57		\$ 21.94		\$ 21.00	\$ 34.02	\$ 26.41			\$ 18.40	\$ 23.96								
Treasurer	\$ 22.53	25.00	\$ 25.60	\$ 0.60	\$ 25.00	13.6%	\$ 3,994	\$ 4,185	\$ 25.75	\$ 25.13	\$ 23.83	\$ 18.22	\$ 38.23	\$ 27.00	\$ 23.66	\$ 23.99				\$ 38.23	\$ 22.28	\$ 28.28	\$ 23.41					\$ 32.93									
Market Alignment For FY 2023 Increases to Budget																																					
FY22 Total Budget			\$ 6,627,635			Proposed	\$ 24,131	0.36%																													
						COLA	7,038	0.11%																													
						Total Proposed	\$ 31,169	0.47%																													