

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, August 9, 2022 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Members Absent: Melody Chartier

Town Administrator: Becky Torres

Non-members Present: Mike Vinskey

Meeting called to order at 6:31 pm.

1. Review minutes from 7/12 Meeting

Minutes approved as amended, 6-0.

2. Finance Committee Meeting Guiding Principles

- a. Focus on agenda and stay aware of time constraints to meet agenda items. Respect volunteers' time by keeping within 2-hour meeting limit
- b. Work to receive department budgets with enough time to review and request any additional information before their scheduled date to meet with the Fin Com. Pre-populate the request form with the current year's budget numbers (Susie volunteers)
- c. Consider the current process of including citizen participation in meeting. What are other committees doing? After substantive committee discussions call on some non-members, keeping in mind time restraints. Community comments are welcome. Current practice is working well.
- d. Minority Report Process – If there is a written report it should be reviewed by whole committee for factual accuracy. Review Moderator's guidance. Finance Committee Annual report presents data that explains budget decisions voted by the majority reached over the course of the year. Some data isn't available until conclusion of process. Minority report can reflect alternate positions proposed over the course of the year. More discussion on this as the year progresses. All members can articulate their points of view at Annual Town Meeting. Important to maintain respect for good faith arguments from all members.

3. FY22 Cost Report review

- a. Expense report is not the final for FY22; final close of FY 22 expected in September. The Select Board Expense line shows a negative balance due to some insurance costs incorrectly attributed to Select Expense - this line will be corrected. The school has some grant funds to correct some lines that are erroneously showing deficits. The transportation bill came in late from the regional school and is not on the expense report. The bill is higher due to fuel escalator factor. The cost is more than allocated and regional school finance director will look at ways to remediate that. Unspent fire department lines have been committed but the vendors haven't delivered. Those funds will roll forward into FY23 to meet those costs. A rough estimate is that the free cash balance will be around \$150K.

4. Update on Regional School Assessment committee

- a. Mike Morris will set up a schedule for late August – September meetings. If these are delayed, George will be gone for the month of October and Ajay has volunteered to attend with Bob and Melissa.

5. Updates on capital projects: [Culvert], Library and School Roof

- a. Locks Pond Culvert will not go forward this year. The proposed November start will not be a safe time to detour traffic. Leverett will also be detouring traffic for a culvert replacement this fall. A recent inspection shows the continued need for Shutesbury's culvert replacement, but it has not further deteriorated in any substantial way. National Grid has moved its wires but not the pole; Verizon has not moved their wires. Places to store the 47' 11' x 11' cement culvert is being considered by the highway department. The project is expected to be done Aug/Sept. 2023. MAS, the contractor, is holding to their price. The DOT grant has been extended.
- b. The RFP for the engineering of the school roof replacement is underway. The MSBA turned down the application and has again moved the time frame; now it is 30 years and Shutesbury's roof is 29 years old. Jo Comerford has worked to get Shutesbury a 200K earmark but the legislature has frozen all earmarks and is wrestling with a requirement concerning distribution of revenue surplus. ARPA and other town funds will be used.
- c. Lot O32, the site for the new library, is undergoing wetlands delineation on the entire site and further soil/water testing by Fuss and O'Neill to meet DEP requirements are proceeding, utilizing ARPA funds. The first million of the State library grant money and 300K of town money are being set up in special town accounts. The Building Committee is being set up. People who meet specific criteria can send in a letter of interest to the Select Board.

6. Committee Reports

- a. Members agree to continue their representation on other town boards. George and Melody on Personnel, Susie on School Committee, Ajay and Bob on Capital Planning and Jim Hemingway on MLP/Broadband. Personnel has met and updated the job descriptions for Fire Chief, Administrative Assistant and Highway Superintendent.

7. Schedule next Fin-com meeting

- a. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 6 at 6:30 pm if we can have a quorum. Members will receive a draft of last year's annual budget request letter and the schedule of appointments. They can submit edits to the chair in preparation for our next meeting. We will continue to discuss best practices for FY24 budget process.

Other items not anticipated by the Chair of the Committee

- a. A review of the cherry sheets showed there is higher than anticipated state revenue that will lower the town's projected FY23 tax rate when the recap sheet is completed in the late fall.
- b. Committee members signatures needed on the funds transfer form in the Fin Com mailbox.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm