

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, October 4, 2022 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Members Absent: George Arvanitis, Jim Walton, Melody Chartier

Town Administrator: Becky Torres

Members of the Public: Mike Vinskey, Amanda Alix

Meeting called to order at 6:34 pm.

1. Minutes from 9/14/22 meeting approved as amended.

2. Update on budget request letter/form

- a. These are in the department and committee mailboxes.
- b. Most committees and some departments do not get the FY 23 budget numbers filled in on their form. This information was filled in only for the departments the Fin Com meets with. Next year the letter should be amended to note that.
- c. Our first two department meetings are scheduled for Nov. 15 with the Highway then the Police.
- d. We will receive all budget requests ahead of our meetings with departments. In an effort to keep an orderly process, there was a discussion about whether last minute changes should be allowed. The requests are made 8 months before the new fiscal year so changes in some budget proposals may occur. This has not happened very often.
- e. The chair will set up a virtual folder of google docs of all the fiscal year budget requests that finance committee members can access on line.

3. Update on the School Roof

- a. Gale Engineering is doing an evaluation of the roof's needs which are complicated, as the Building Envelope study shows. The evaluation will help make a full design proposal clear for the engineering design bid.
- b. An MSBA grant for the roof is not likely, as noted at the last meeting. If the MSBA awards Shutesbury a grant for a boiler, indications are that the state estimate is not what the town wants or can afford.

4. Another building envelope matter

- a. If there is ARPA or other grant money available, integrating ventilation with heating system would be prudent.
- b. The \$200K Green Communities grant that the town is applying for required 50% of the grant (\$100K) to upgrade to LED lighting and the remaining \$90K for enhanced insulation and sealing of the buildings..
- c. The Town expects to apply for another Green Communities grant next year.

5. Expense report review

- a. This is our first review of the expense report in the format provided by the new VADAR system. It will take some getting used to.
- b. Gail Weiss is semi-retired and only works days. Becky will find out more about the expense sheet formats and help us get up to speed.
- c. Some FY23 lines are spent out due to contracted services, policies that are paid up, etc.
- d. The Highway department had several repairs this summer- on the brush hog and the lawn mowers. Will the highway department need to request an increase in their

equipment maintenance line? We will be able to ask Tim on Nov. 15 when Highway comes in to discuss their FY24 request.

- e. FY22 has not been closed out yet. We will see a more complete accounting when that is done.

6. Other committee reports

School Committee

- a. Jackie Mendonsa has developed a rubric when considering spending school choice funds.
 - 1. Immediate needs that arise
 - 2. Not effect longer term programming
 - 3. An expense that will not need to be folded into the general budget
- b. The School Committee will be considering other criteria such as a threshold level. Further questions can be directed to Dan Hayes, the School Committee chair.
- c. In our discussion how school choice should be utilized in the budget and as part of the budgeting process was raised.
- d. The parking lot is a disaster. There are some safety concerns. The highway department has done some patching but the lot was supposed to be repaved in 1999. This needs to be a priority for capital planning.
- e. The Superintendent's office will contact the Select Board to ask for them to sign an application for a \$32K Community Compact Grant for U28. They want to hire the Collins Center to do a regional efficiency study. The center has expertise in analyzing and recommending how a region can share personnel and services more efficiently, thereby saving money.
- f. The school committee voted to spend \$20K from school choice funds for an increase in hours for a math interventionist position. The COVID disruption has shown this is needed to help students catch up.
- g. The 5th and 6th grade classes participated in Nature's Classroom, a three-day, overnight program in Groton, MA. This program was paid for with school choice funds and will likely become an every other year program for Shutesbury.
- h. There is a FY 21 budget audit being conducted. Next audit will happen in three years.
- i. The heating system repairs have been slowed by supply chain issues.

Guardrails

- j. Bob and Ajay will meet with this regional sub-committee to represent Shutesbury's vote not to endorse a guardrail provision. The 5-year rolling average of 100% statutory should be stable enough.
- k. The meeting may be an opportunity to find out more about the track/field project process. Ajay will check the Regional School Committee minutes as well.

Broadband

- l. Transfer from Crocker to South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD) is in process.

7. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 1 at 6:30

- a. Ajay will send out last year's finance topic list that Jim organized. If we see a topic we want to add to 11/1 agenda or for a future meeting, email Ajay.
- b. We will discuss the proposed track project funding and the Finance Committee role in the decision. Ajay will have some more information on that.
- c. Meeting adjourned at 7:53

