

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, November 15, 2022 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present: Ajay Khashu, Bob Groves, Jim Hemingway, Susie Mosher, Jim Walton, George Arvanitis, and ex-officio member, Town Administrator Becky Torres

Members Absent: Melody Chartier

Members of the Public: Miriam Defant, Tim Hunting, Steve Sullivan, and Mike Vinsky,

Meeting called to order at 6:34 pm

1. Highway Department FY24 Budget Review - Tim Hunting

- a. All lines were level funded from FY 23 with the exception of two lines:
 - i. Uniform service is increased by \$250 (6%). This is the first price increase and it is still lower than previous vendor.
 - ii. Road Markings line is increased by \$500. (6%). Tim anticipates this will give the department enough money to paint one more road in the spring season.
- b. The current year's maintenance and repair budget has seen extra spending to fix the mower, the 10-wheeler and the John Deere tractor.
 - i. The mower problem was not fixed after spending \$4,600 at Devon Lane. It appears to be a wiring problem.
 - ii. The 10-wheeler had a successful turbo repair
 - iii. The clutch job on the 1983 John Deere (with 6,500 hours on it) did not fix the problem, and the cracked transmission pump would add another \$2,500 just for parts. Similar type used tractors of that age run between \$3 – 4,600. It looks like the tractor should be used for parts, rather than sink more money into it for repairs. It is a busy season now. Once he has time to gather more information, Tim will talk to Capital Planning.
- c. Once the department gets further into the year, Tim will consider whether the machine maintenance line is adequate at \$28k or should be increased. It was \$30k in FY22.
- d. He will give the FinCom a heads up if FY23 repairs run over and he needs to request a FinCom reserve transfer.

2. Conservation Commission Budget Request - Miriam DeFant

- a. Postage costs have risen over the past 3 – 4 years. The Conservation Commission is requesting a 10% increase (\$116.) for those costs. In the past the commission has been able to apply other funds, but now needs an increase.
- b. It is anticipated that there will be more trainings and conferences that will take up the rest of the budget.

3. Budget Review adjustments

- a. Google Docs - Some members had problems uploading from the Google Docs file Ajay created. It appears to work for Chrome users. He'll look into it.
- b. Chief Burgess could not attend tonight. Becky will see if Nov. 29 or Dec. 13 will work for her.

4. Updates for school roof and track project

- a. Shutesbury received \$200k in earmarked funds through the joint efforts of Senator Jo Comerford and town officials. Originally this was sought for the library project but since the town secured library funding on June 28, and in light of another disappointing round of MSBA funding thwarted again, it was decided the \$200k would go toward the school roof. Along with the ARPA funds the Select Board designated for the school roof, the town has prepared \$500k so far. Gale Associates

has the contract to evaluate the project and help prepare the specifications needed for the engineering RFP. A special town meeting will likely be scheduled for February 2023 to approve funding.

- b. Steve Sullivan provided information on the track project. Last spring's debt authorization limits the options to # 1 or #3. The private fundraising efforts are based on raising \$1m, the additional cost over option #2, for artificial turf.
- c. Consideration of option #2 would require a new debt authorization vote by all four towns and would contradict the fundraising efforts for option #3 to date.
- d. There have been no updated estimates, but the options include a 10% contingency amount.
- e. Option #1 covers replacing the 6-lane track surface and re-doing the soccer field with grass. It does not cover fixing drainage issues or expanding to 8-lanes.
- f. The track project is on the regional school committee agenda for Thursday, Nov. 17. There have been many letters from the public concerning artificial turf. Steve will send us any updated materials provided for that meeting.
- g. The vote for CPA money in the towns with Annual Town Meetings happens after the Jan. 16, 2023 private fundraising timeframe.

5. Update on Assessors office, Recap sheet, and Free Cash Certification

- a. David Burgess, former assessor, helped resolve some open cases and answered a list of questions that Becky and Leslie sent him.
- b. Roy Bishop has finished the preliminary property revaluation. Town total valuation went up about 20%. There is more work to be done.
- c. Gail has started the LA4 form which is a summary of the number of parcels in each property class such as industrial, residential, commercial, etc. Town officials may be able to get the recap in by early December and then we will get the certified Free Cash amount later in December.

6. Minutes of 11/1/2022 approved as amended.

7. Expense Report Review

- a. Gail has found a report that will be just as easy to read as last year's.
- b. The Health Insurance costs for FY22 were lower – Becky is expecting about \$85k returned from that line into free cash.
- c. Legal budget is about half spent due to a few legal issues.

8. Next meeting is scheduled for November 29, @6:30

- a. We will look over the approved MSBA grant for the school boilers. There are on-going problems with the boilers and the grant may not be designed to deal with them appropriately.
- b. We will meet with the Fire Department and Police Department to review their budget requests.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58