

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, September 5, 2023 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Absent Member: George Arvanitis

Finance Committee meeting called to order at 6:31 pm

Minutes from July 25, 2023 were approved as written.

1. Draft FY 25 Budget Request Letter and forms
 - a. approved
 - b. Tentative schedule drafted
 - c. All completed request forms will go to Becky first. Then Ajay can put them on a google doc site for members.
 - d. We drafted a list of conversation points for the department liaisons:
 - i. Limits and use of Finance Committee reserves
 - ii. The importance of using Finance Committee budget request form
 - iii. Review of maintenance history and needs
 - iv. Deadlines for budget proposals, requests to Capital Planning and meeting with Finance Committee
2. Alternative ATM budget format follow-up
 - a. Proposed simplified ATM budget form researched after Moderator's suggestion
 - b. Suggesting two lines for most departments – Wages/Operating
 - c. Town Meeting vote would approve two categories of expenses, allowing department heads some flexibility for meeting expenses within the categories
 - d. Budget request forms, discussions with Finance Committee and monthly reports will continue to use current detailed budgeting lines
 - e. For comparison purposes, historical data would be re-grouped in the format being proposed. George will help design a spreadsheet to keep simplified format in sync with current detailed format during budget planning

Our discussion concerned responsibility, accountability, effects on overall spending, transparency, sense of control, and monitoring. A motion was made and seconded: Move to change the budget presented to Annual Town meeting for a vote to a simplified format of Wages / Operating. The Finance Committee will continue to receive the current detailed financial reports and will continue monitoring department expenses. Motion passes: Yes = 4 and No = 2.

3. Highway Superintendent hiring committee
 - a. April is the Personnel Board representative and Bob represents the Finance Committee

4. Project updates

- a. Despite the rainy summer, the school roof is on and trim work will be finished up on the weekends now that school is in session
- b. Culvert is moving forward again with larger bypass pipe secured. The unused smaller bypass pipe was restocked and some money was refunded to the town
- c. PFAS project includes 33 houses and testing results are being examined

5. Miscellaneous

- a. Due to the turmoil in the Regional School office, we should keep an eye on maintaining the assessment agreement for the five-year rolling average statutory with 4% guardrails. We should find out if the agreement is written up and confirmed. There is a tough financial year projected for FY25. Ajay will ask to meet with Doug Slaughter, interim superintendent

Our next meeting is September 19, 2023 at 6:30. We will review the latest expense report.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14pm