

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, September 19, 2023 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Absent Member: Bob Groves, Jim Walton

Finance Committee meeting called to order at 6:31 pm

Minutes from Sept. 5, 2023 were approved as amended.

1. We reviewed the new format for the FY25 budget at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. Most department budgets will be presented in two categories: operating and wages.
 - A. George volunteered to make a mock-up of FY 24 using the new format to see what it would look like. That exercise will provide a discussion for best ways to handle the categorizations as we prepare for ATM.
 - B. All our work with the departments and the accountant's monthly reports will continue to use the current, detailed budget lines.
 - C. Other ideas to make a smooth transition at ATM is to post a link and have a few printed copies of the fully detailed budget, the current format we use as we develop FY 25.
 - D. As an enterprise fund, the MLP will retain its flexibility to move funds between lines.

2. FY 25 Process update
 - A. FY 25 budget request letters, pre-populated forms, and schedules have been put in hallway mailboxes (as well as emailed copies) for Accountant, Assessor, Collector, Fire, Highway, Police and Treasurer on Monday, 9/18. Liaison contact is included. Letters and schedules went out to all other mailboxes.
 - B. U-28, MLP, and Library use their own budget format and include the previous year. They received the letter and schedule by email.
 - C. Buildings Committee, Board of Health, Town Clerk all received an electronic version of letter. Susie will complete the notifications of all the remaining boards and committees with an email of the letter and blank budget forms.
 - D. The letter and budget form will be posted on the Fin Com webpage.
 - E. Members of the Finance Committee should make contact as the liaison to the assigned department before our next meeting on October 3.
 - F. Key points of the liaison role are:
 - a. Check in regarding deadlines, scheduled appointment with Fin Com, and using Fin Com budget form
 - b. Review maintenance history and needs. Deadline of Feb. 1 for capital requests
 - c. Limits and process for requesting Fin Com reserve transfers
 - d. Neither advocate or make judgements in department discussions regarding expenses. Liaison role is to clarify and answer questions.

3. Project updates:
 - A. School roof is complete. There may even be a small amount of savings. Notifying the public about the completion of this huge project via the school news and a town announce from the Buildings Committee would be good.
 - B. The school security cameras and library rug are installed. Heavy rain drainage into the courtyard leaked in under the rotted sliding door in the school library. Buildings Committee is working to fix this problem.
 - C. The Locks Pond Rd. culvert is well underway.
 - D. PFAS update will be coming in the next two weeks or so.
 - E. Steve Sullivan was hired as the new Highway Superintendent. The Personnel Board will review the job description for a new highway operator to replace Steve.
 - F. Rep. Saunders' office is holding public hours in Shutesbury on Monday, Oct. 2 at 10 a.m. in Town Hall. If you have topics you want to raise it would be helpful to send an email ahead of time to the aide, Maddie: madeline.sinsley@mahouse.gov

4. Expense report review
 - A. FY23 books are expected to be completed by mid-October. Final cherry sheet numbers are in with about \$6K more than projected. David Burgess, our administrative assessor, is working on new growth revenue numbers to help solidify FY 23 final numbers. George and April will pass along Assessor information as it shapes up.
 - B. Health Insurance rates are projected to increase, but we likely have allocated enough in FY24. The FY 24 expense report shows the usual beginning of the year disbursements.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, Oct. 3 at 6:30 pm. Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.