

Shutesbury Finance Committee Minutes
August 31, 2017 - Shutesbury Town Hall, 7pm

Members Present: George Arvanitis, Elaine Puleo, Bob Groves, Jim Hemingway, Eric Stocker, **Members Absent:** Weezie Houle, Jim Walton **Non-Members present:** Becky Torres, Town Administrator, Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, Select board

- Elect Chair(s), Secretary, Reps to other committees for FY19 – George and Eric were unanimously reelected as co-chairs, Weezie was reelected as secretary. All other appointments were postponed to the next meeting
- Review EOY (FY17) Expense and Revenue Reports –
The elementary school was not closed out due to a potential bill balance that could still come in. Noted that the charter tuition and regional school lines may be solid (last regional quarterly payment went out already). Highway department will use the 1st 3 lines of carry forwards for the new plow since it did not get on the town meeting warrant. The catch basin clean up began at the end of May beginning of June but the truck broke down and it didn't get completed – will be done in the FY18 year. Waste disposal on lot O32 just hasn't happened yet. Revenue for '17 – we're ahead by \$31,100.22
- Review YTD (FY18) Expense and Revenue Reports – this does not have carry forwards.
- Update from George re: Regional Assessment-
Committee met twice this summer with consultant. In general it was very productive. They were all enlightened about how state aid works. Everyone is talking about how to measure ability to pay. Each town gave a brief report of their financial status: Amherst – trouble getting outplacements in place and have 10% hike in health insurance costs, Leverett – their court case for abatement is done with an annual \$60K/yr from the property, Pelham – has a school choice issue that was \$70K under funded also facing an added \$20K in health insurance and \$20K in SPED costs, Shutesbury – has a new selectboard member.
The discussion was around how to measure ability to pay, looking for other regional models. Everyone agrees EQV works. George is aiming for a resolution that would be the statutory method with a 5 yr rolling average. Pelham and Leverett benefit from the state guarantees of foundation monies being grandfathered at 17.5% minimum
Plan is to have everything wrapped up by the 4-town meeting in December.
Bottom line is that George is feeling good about where the discussion is heading. Next meeting is 9/12. George will invite Mark Abhrams to town to talk to our committees.
- Update/discussion on resurfacing and paving projects at SES and Highway Department
Right now only the sidewalk and Fire Department are on tap to be done. All school drawings were scanned (thank you Bob!) so everyone has detailed drawings available. A bid for replacement of a minimum of 43-47 tiles was put out . As of tonight 2 bids are in – pricing is dramatically lower for repair vs. total replacement. Completion of the project is expected by Fall.
- Reports from Committees
 - Broadband – moving along with Sep 30 ride out – pole survey. WG&E contract was reviewed by town counsel, waiting for Steve to return to finalize. Make ready is close to happening
 - School committee Union 28 has a new finance director. Mike Morris is staying another year as regional superintendent. There's a returning balance of \$35K from SPED encumbrance, \$22K for last year's computer expenses that had already been prepaid. May need this money for an out of district placement so, waiting to see.
 - Committees meeting with Joe Marcarian – writing financial guidelines. Set a minimum level of 10% of operating budget should be in free cash and 5% in stabilization. He is creating new budget sheets for town meeting. Long range forecasting for 3-5 yrs is good for capital planning. Looks like there's a need to have a conversation about rewriting the bylaws with respect to the building committee-finance committee and capital planning. Discussion postponed to our next meeting. There was an interesting discussion with varying opinions on the dire urgency to fully fund our OPEB obligation by

2040.

- Personnel Board – focusing on performance review for department heads and professionals. Modified the goal setting performance review. Who reviews whom: trustees review librarian, board of assessors reviews assessor, town administrator review the financial professionals, one member each from Select eboard, Finance committee and Personnel board review department heads and town administrator.

- Any other item(s) unanticipated by co-chairs
 - Contract negotiation representatives were “elected” as follows
 - Bob – Police Union
 - Elaine – Fire Chief
 - George – Town Administrator
 - Eric – Highway Superintendent

Next meeting September 26, 2017

Adjourned 8:46PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Elaine Puleo