

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, September 9, 2025 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present: Ajay Khashu - chair, Susie Mosher, Molly Moss, Laura Soito, April Stein, and Jim Walton
Absent: George Arvanitis Non-Members Attending: Hayley Bolton –

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

- I. Minutes of August 26 and September 4 approved as amended
- II. Information for Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles
 - A. Confirmed Articles 4, 6 and 7 with stabilization funding need 2/3 vote to pass
 - B. A clause will be inserted in Art. 8 clarifying the project is contingent on getting the MSBA grant
- III. Review of updated Finance Committee Report
 - A. We have not had an STM this early and so revisions to the Finance Committee Report presented at ATM are new to the public and need to be clear.
 - B. Changes to FinCom report presented at ATM will be printed in red. This affects pages 1, 2, 3 and both pie charts
 - C. A narrative report with notes on specific articles is needed.
 - D. Review of articles for narrative:
 - i. Article 1: Corrects error in ATM budget. Recommend funding from tax levy because it is ongoing salary expense
 - ii. Article 2: Corrects omission from FY26 salary alignment schedule. Recommend funding from tax levy because it is ongoing salary expense. We reviewed the increased amount of \$1,787.20 and determined it was 100% of the alignment instead of 50%. Voted 6 - 0 to change the amount in the warrant to \$893.60 to reflect the 50% increase given the other 6 positions at ATM. Hayley will update Ellen on this number
 - iii. Article 3: Recommend funding from tax levy because it is ongoing salary expense
 - iv. Article 4: A second increase in Health Insurance came in after May ATM. To meet this additional \$124K cost, we recommended three funding resources to ease in this large increase: \$61,500 from tax levy, \$12,500 from Stabilization funds, and a one year, \$50K decrease of OPEB funding for FY26
 - v. Article 5: One-time expense; recommend funding from Stabilization
 - vi. Article 6: End of the fiscal year process to balance the budget. One-time expense; recommend funding from Stabilization
 - vii. Article 7: Balance due on Regional Assessment for Elementary School transportation contract. One-time expense; recommend funding from Stabilization
 - viii. Article 8: New MSBA grant available to repair and replace roof on middle school after years of delayed funding. If four towns approve, and contingent of grant

award work can begin in the summer of 2026. Regional school capital debt schedule for four towns is based on EQV formula

IV. Getting the information out

- A. Select Board will sign and post the warrant
- B. Hayley will take the narrative report notes and make an information flyer for STM
- C. George will update the Finance Committee Report for FY26
- D. Fin Com will approve these documents at the next meeting.
- E. Fin Com Town Announce will notify the public and invite questions on posted warrant at our next meeting

V. Update on Regional School Budget discussion

- A. Mass. Association of Regional Schools (MARS) released its report with fiscal data on four town but was unable attend 9/9/25 meeting for the presentation
- B. Some initial questions and responses to the report from four town members indicate concerns about unused excess levy and override capacity, unequal government spending in various town categories, etc.
- C. Rescheduled meeting for presentation is Sept. 25 at 5 pm Prepare comments and questions

VI. FY27 Budget Request letters and process

- A. The steps in process were reviewed for new members. Susie will make a sample packet for members to pick up from the Fin Com mailbox in the Town Hall hallway
- B. What information or changes do we want for FY27? Salaries, revenue projections? We may want an initial meeting with all departments and boards to discuss the challenges of FY27
- C. We are starting this process later than usual. We may need to review the timeline for when the department need to get their budgets in and when we will meet

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 25 at 6:30. Meeting adjourned @8:29pm