

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, February 10, 2026 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Meeting called to order at 6:31 p.m.

- I. Minutes of previous meetings
 - A. Reviewed and approved minutes of the 1/7/26 meeting as amended
 - B. Reviewed and approved the minutes of the 1/13/26 meeting as amended
 - C. Reviewed and approved the minutes of the 1/27/26 meeting as amended

- II. Review Draft FY27 Operating Budget
 - A. Reviewed the draft budget
 - B. Confirmed that all budget requests submitted to the FinCom have been entered into the budget, and that the preliminary COLA has been applied to all eligible salary lines
 - C. Updated\added clarifying notes to lines that have unusual activity or material differences from the prior year budget amounts
 - D. The second half of the FY26 salary market alignments (six positions) to be determined by the Personnel Board
 - E. Still waiting for Elementary School transportation estimate from regional school
 - F. Identified lines needing further research and added placeholder amounts to these lines
 - G. County Health District is under change and the Valley Health Collaborative who provides services is recommending this be funded through a revolving account. The revolving account revenues would come from the state
 - H. Need to check with the Treasurer for final debt service amounts and the funding of the Clean Water Trust debt
 - I. We will schedule a meeting with the Building Committee to determine if the budget should fund costs for building maintenance and repairs
 - J. Added \$4k for water quality testing for the library building. We expect to have cost increases in a few other budget lines for the new building
 - K. The preliminary total budget is \$8,451k. This results in a deficit of \$387K before applying excess levy capacity to revenue
 - L. The Amherst Public Regional School committee has not finalized the regional budget
 - M. The Shutesbury School Committee will be voting on their budget at their next meeting
 - N. A question was raised regarding how Amherst Public Regional School ARPS uses rural aid. We will reach out to the region to determine this
 - O. Reviewed revenue estimates. Need to follow up on the interest income estimate
 - P. Reviewed a request and explanations from Hayley for new expenses for the budget:
 - i. Deep cleaning the town hall \$3,500. The committee supported this expense and discussed increasing an existing line, possibly Equipment Maintenance and changing the account name to “Maintenance”

- ii. Municipal finance training seminar (\$925) for the Assistant Town Administrator.
The committee supported this expense
- iii. Hiring a Facilities Manager - \$75,004
 - a. We would like to discuss this with the selectboard
 - b. Discussed using the building fund for the Facilities Manager position
 - c. We need to research how other towns manage their facilities

III. Plan for Fiscal Summit meeting

- A. The committee plans to present the preliminary budget to the town managers, boards and committees
- B. We would like all budget stakeholders to be involved in developing the financing message for town meeting
- C. We will meet on February 17 to prepare for the summit
- D. The summit is tentatively scheduled for February 23 at 3:00 p.m. It will be a hybrid meeting at the library

IV. Library Building Loan

- A. Reviewed funding the building over 10, 15 and 20 years
- B. Discussed benefits and the cost of funding at each level: Longer terms increase total interest cost over the life of the loan, but it aligns the interest cost more closely to the life of library. Longer term loans also spread the cost to more future taxpayers and lowers the tax impact each year
- C. The committee will ask the Treasurer to consider funding the building for over 15 years and to analyze the effect of this
- D. Discussed analyzing the overall town capital plan and preparing for future borrowings

V. Recycling RFP committee

- A. We are comfortable with the committee proceeding without FinCom participation
- B. Discussed researching options for trash hauling including the funding of trash hauling

VI. FinCom Reserve Fund Transfer request to two Highway Department accounts

- A. Equipment Maintenance
 - i. Transfer request of \$6,209
 - ii. The full budget for this line has been spent
- B. Materials
 - i. Transfer request of \$5,000
 - ii. Need this transfer due to unforeseen expenditures
- C. The committee approved the transfer of \$11,209 to these two accounts

VII. Other Business

- A. Pelham will use school choice revenue to fund their FY27 budget increases and has created a long term elementary school planning committee. Shutesbury officials met to discuss absorbing some or all Pelham students in the future and informed Pelham we are open to considering this option

Next meeting is February 17 at 6:30
Meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.