

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Nov. 16, 2004
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Chairman Eric Stocker, Al Beswick, Al Springer, Patrick J. Callahan, Lori Tuominen, Russ Greco and Russ Wilson.

The meeting convened at 7:10 p.m.

The committee met briefly with David C. Dann, the new town administrator. He says he will begin working full time on Dec. 20 and in the meantime will work on Fridays.

The minutes of the meetings of Sept. 30 and Oct. 19 were approved unanimously.

Al Springer says he recently met Leo Parent, the Franklin County veteran's agent. Leo says he will be happy to meet with the Finance Committee if the chairman writes him a letter of invitation. Eric agreed to invite Leo to a future meeting.

Patrick reviewed the recent activities of the town administrator search committee and the police study committee.

The search committee recommended two candidates to the selectmen: David C. Dann of Shutesbury, and former Leverett Selectman Robert Biagi. The selectmen chose David Dann and were able to reach an agreement on a contract.

The police study committee was split in its finding but did recommend that the process for seeking a shared police chief with Leverett move forward. Patrick expressed his reservations about the process, noting that Shutesbury has a stable and highly professional department, while Leverett's department has been much less stable in recent years. Patrick also doubts there will be a large financial benefit from a shared chief. The selectmen, however, have asked that a job description for a shared chief be developed after meeting with the Leverett police study committee.

Al Beswick reported on the recent School Committee meeting. He says there was much discussion about why the school did so poorly on parts of recent MCAS tests. He also outlined why the first grade was recently split into two classes after the veteran teacher Bernice Carew told the administration she was having difficulty handling the class. A new teacher was hired and Bernice now teaches half the class. There was also discussion about a so-called "lock-down" of a classroom by one teacher and the controversy it created. Al also noted that the school has created a sick leave bank for its employees.

Eric reported that the Personnel Committee agreed to a contract with David Dann paying him \$43,500 annually. The contract will run until July 1, 2005 when a new three-year contract will go into place to synchronize it with other town workers on contracts.

Al Beswick noted that there is a meeting Dec. 4 in Amherst to discuss the regional school budget. He says he is apprehensive about this year's regional budget because of the new majority on the Amherst selectmen and the members' lack of financial and political knowledge of the regional situation.

The next meeting was scheduled for Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.