

**SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes for Feb. 15, 2005**  
**Shutesbury Town Hall**

Members present: Eric Stocker, chairman, Al Beswick, Al Springer, Patrick J. Callahan, Lori Tuominen.

The meeting convened at 7:07 p.m.

Tim Hunting, highway superintendent, met with the committee. He said as of Feb. 16 he would have \$2,900 left in the account for snow removal materials. He says he brakes on the International truck need repairs and estimated he will need another \$3,000 in this account to make it to the end of the year. He will submit a request form to the committee for later action.

Eric asked if the current budget line for fuel was sufficient, and Tim says yes. He doesn't know the details of fuel usage, however, because he doesn't keep track of that item. Eric suggested increasing the line item for next year for fuel to \$12,000.

At 7:30 p.m., David Dann, town administrator arrived.

Tim says the \$3,000 budgeted last year for summer help was worth it in terms of moving tasks such as mowing off the regular crew for the summer months. He says he more than saved the \$3,000 in staff wages.

Tim says his cost for uniforms has increased from \$1,675 to about \$1,850 due to rising rates and asked that the committee boost that line item.

Tim says he will be asking for capital funds this year to purchase a new lawnmower. Overall, he asked for \$3,000 more for highway materials, with most other items remaining at current levels.

Sgt Gary Thomann arrived to discuss the police budget. He says he will ask for a level-funded budget for next year that includes a negotiated 3 percent cost-of-living raise for the officers. David Dann explained the use of community policing funds and how the Governor's highway safety grant money is used within the police budget.

David also says he expects the selectmen to make some decision on whether to hire a shared police chief with Leverett when that board meets Feb. 22.

The minutes of the Feb. 2, 2005 meeting were approved unanimously.

The Finance Committee approved a \$5,000 transfer from the committee reserve requested by Gabe Volker for legal fees for tax title takings for this fiscal year.

There was a discussion on what figures to use to calculate how much money will be available for the coming year's budget, especially where this has an impact on school budgets. At issue was how much new spending the town will be able to afford within the current budget restraints. It was agreed that the committee will not ask for an override of Proposition 2 ½ this year, and will strongly recommend against using reserves for operating budgets as has been the panel's traditional stance.

Eric opened a discussion on how to reduce the elementary budget by moving some items into capital accounts. The committee agreed to instruct Al Beswick to tell the local school committee to restrain its budget to an increase of about \$50,000 overall. There were also questions raised about some pay raises include in the budget figures presented to the Finance Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.