

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Aug. 9, 2004
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Chairman Eric Stocker, Al Beswick, Russ Greco, Patrick J. Callahan and Russ Wilson. Guests: David Ames, town administrator.

The meeting convened at 7:03 p.m.

The minutes of the July 20 meeting were approved unanimously.

David Ames asked that the Finance Committee support spending \$5,000 for repairs to the dam at Lake Wyola. The money would pay for filing a notice of intent for repairs to the existing structure. The committee gave its unanimous approval.

Al reported on the most recent meeting of the School Committee, noting that Ron Berger, who had been a teacher at the school for 27 years had resigned. Efforts were underway to hire a replacement.

Eric and David discussed a recent meeting of the Personnel Committee.

David Ames asked the committee to consider approving the expenditure of \$2,400 to pay for on-site testing of the gasoline tank on the Taylor property. He said owner Barry Roberts was planning to have the tank unearthed and had agreed to have town representatives present. The idea is to have consultant, hired by the town, present when the tank is dug up to conduct soil tests to see if there is pollution at the site. David said test could be done on the sides of the pit and in the bottom immediately after the tank is removed. The test is important because it will tell the town whether there are pollution issue on the property that might add to the proposed cost of acquiring the land. There was a discussion of what the liability might be in case there is environmental pollution from the tank and what effect this would have on efforts to have the town buy the land. The committee unanimously approved the expenditure.

There followed a discussion of how the town might structure the purchase of the Taylor property if the sale is approved by voters. The options are: borrow the \$212,500 over 10 years, pay for it by bonding, perhaps over 20 years, or buying it outright using free cash. The committee recommended using some borrowing, noting that the amount of free cash available to the town won't be certified by the state until later in the fall. Estimates are, however, that there will be a significant increase in free cash this year.

The committee voted unanimously to support buying the land using some borrowing, with details to be worked out closer to the Town Meeting and when the free cash situation is clearer. Al and Russ expressed some displeasure with the nature of the deal from Barry Roberts, but overall agreed it is a prudent purchase. This view reflected the opinion of the other members as well.

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

Patrick agreed to write the annual report for the committee by Sept. 1.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan