

SHUTESBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes for Jan. 22, 2008
Shutesbury Town Hall

Members present: Eric Stocker, chairman, Rus Wilson, Elaine Puleo, Al Springer, Lori Tuominen, Mark Pocsik and Patrick J. Callahan. Guests: David Dann, town administrator, Cliff Read, library trustee and Mary Anne Antonellis, town librarian.

The meeting convened at 7:04 p.m.

The minutes of the Jan. 15, 2008 meeting were approved unanimously as amended.

The committee reviewed and discussed the proposed wage and salary plan from the Personnel Board to take effect on July 1, 2008. It was decided to ask Penny Kim to come to a future meeting to discuss details that the Finance Committee didn't understand about the plan.

Cliff Read of the library trustees, and Mary Ann Antonellis, the town librarian, arrived to talk about the revised version of last year's budget the Finance Committee had requested. Cliff says he met during the weekend with Gail Weiss, town treasurer, and David Dann, town administrator, to clarify details such as the revenue section of the budget for last year. He presented an updated version of the budget sheet that the committee reviewed at its Jan. 15 meeting. The goal is to have a budget for annual Town Meeting that is transparent in terms of town funding and other non-town sources of funding and tracks consistently from year to year. Eric passed out a version of the budget he crafted in an attempt to show a clearer picture of revenue and spending in the library budget. Eric says he will work with David Dann to come up with a final version of the library budget.

The committee did agree that the current spending plan for next year is acceptable. It includes a total budget of \$48,562, with Town Meeting being asked to appropriate \$36,900, compared to a total budget in the current year of \$40,297 with a town appropriation of \$37,033.

Al Springer reported that the Personnel Committee needs to conduct annual reviews for Tom Harding, police chief, and David Dann, the town administrator. Al agreed to be the Finance Committee representative for Tom's review, and Rus Wilson will serve on David's review.

Elaine reported that the School Committee wants to know if the town can join the state's Group Insurance Commission as a way to save money on health insurance.

She also says the committee has decided not to hire another teacher for next year and will agree to keep its budget to a 3-percent increase for next year if the town agrees to pay for transportation costs estimated at between \$10,000 and \$12,000.

The regional school budget, meanwhile, currently has a budget deficit of \$389,000, Elaine says.

Eric reported that he had talked with Bob Mahler, school principal, about the recent artist-in residence program that cost \$10,000. He reported that the program ran for eight days and involved every child in the school. Eric says Mahler also reported that Eric was the first person to call him and ask for details about the program.

The next meeting is set for Jan. 29.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Submitted by Patrick J. Callahan.