

Shutesbury Finance Committee Minutes Tuesday, October 22, 2019, Town Hall, 7pm

Members Present: Eric Stocker, Rita Farrell, Bob Groves, Jim Walton, Ajay Khashu and Jim Hemingway **Members Absent:** Weezie Houle **Non-Members present:** Becky Torres, Town Administrator, Jeff Lacy, Meryl Mandell, Gary Bernhard

- 1) Approved minutes for 9/10 and 9/17 as amended.
- 2) Eric is keeping track of all the scheduling changes to those departments that will be attending future FinCom meetings.
- 3) Becky went over the \$231,000 total, not counting carried forward, of under-spent funds during the last fiscal year, all of which is going into free cash. The total of carried over is \$217,000. Total carried over and carried forward to free cash is \$448,000.
- 4) Meryl Mandell and Gary Bernhart from recycling spoke. They want funding for a new shed to house the recycling materials on the SES grounds – trash bags, etc. The shed at the school has been used up to now but is in not great condition. Meryl favors a shed built by Shed Works in Belchertown. Bob Groves would like to take a look at the existing shed to check its condition and make recommendations.
- 5) Reviewed Expense Report, 10/3/19
 - a) Fire Department expenses/wages are rather high for this time of year.
 - b) Legal expenses are lower than one might expect. Two active legal issues – well work and dogs (a dispute between a dog owner and the Select Board).
 - c) Fire Department often pays for some of its expenses for the whole year in advance which accounts for why some of that line in the report is as high as it is.
 - d) The school choice and charter school Tuition lines fortunately balance out (both are volatile and rather unpredictable). Incoming choice money does not appear on this report.
 - e) Lot 032 cleanup was carried forward, yet to be spent.
 - f) Health insurance is also somewhat unpredictable as well depending on changes in personnel.
- 6) Regional School discussion: what to do?
 - a) We should move towards using the statutory method, currently at 30%, to a much greater degree, 50% or greater.
 - b) Need for a united front along with the Select Board and the School Committee. How to negotiate with the other towns for a more aggressive change, that is, an increase in the statutory percentage that Shutesbury contributes.
 - c) Jeff Lacy brought some graphs that displayed the % effect of embracing statutory when compared to the overall budget for all 4 towns. Currently we are at 30% statutory, due to go to 40% next year, perhaps. Statutory method is based in part on yearly enrollment.
 - d) Some agreement for applying a 5 year rolling average to the calculations. Becky also contributed a sheet of calculations that need to be studied.
 - e) The hope is for FinCom to agree on a specific recommendation and present it to the Select Board and the School Committee. It's a very complicated business, financially speaking...
- 7) Set Next Meeting
 - a) November 5, 2019

