

**Shutesbury Finance Committee Minutes**  
**Tuesday, May 12, 2020, Town Hall, 7pm**

**Members Present:** Eric Stocker, Bob Groves, Jim Hemingway, Ajay Khashu, Rita Farrell and Weezie Houle, Jim Walton **Members Absent:** **Non-Members present:** Becky Torres, Select Board: Elaine Puleo, April Stein, Melissa Makepeace O'Neil **Personnel Board:** Peg Ross, Ralph Armstrong **Guests:** Jeff Lacy, Mike Vinskey, George Arvanitis, Susie Mosier, Kevin Rudden, Phil Parker, Ellen McKay, Melody Chartier, Linda Avis Scott

- 1) Meet with Personnel and Select Board.
- 2) Rita Review last Finance Committee:
  - a) Where things stood with budget.
  - b) That we don't want to slash the budget but to use Free Cash to offset the loss of state aid. Given the reduction of aid, we can meet all of the departmental requests.
  - c) In addition, due to the tax rate, that we use around \$400K, fund the current budget and reduce the tax rate by \$1.
  - d) This does not include a projected cut in the Regional Budget , which we will know in the next week or two. If the Regional Budget gets cut, we may not need to use as much Free Cash as the reduction could be significant.
  - e) The assessment formulas would all be beneficial to Shutesbury.
  - f) Kevin Rudden it looks like values will go up and that will bring down the tax as well.
  - g) There is no slowdown in real estate. More sales in calendar 2019 than in the previous 4 years. Sales are coming in at \$20-30,000 over assessment. Assessments are way below the market value. Mortgage interest rates are low. ReFis are in full swing. They require an interior inspection. Houses are on the market maybe a week and there is tremendous competition for the houses.
  - h) Ellen mentioned that we need to continue funding OPEB. If not, it could be flagged in an audit.
  - i) George disagrees with those who wish to reduce the budget.
  - j) Two different pots of about \$200K. One is a decline in state aid. The second pot is the forward-thinking items, either taking them out or leaving them in the budget but funding them with Free Cash.
  - k) Net use of Free Cash would be about \$260K.
- 3) All Committees adjourned.
- 4) Meeting adjourned at 9pm
- 5) Upcoming Meetings:
  - a) May 19, 2020, 7pm, Final Budget Prep/final ATM Warrant Vote
  - b) June 2, 9, 16, or 23, 2020, 7pm, Town Meeting Prep if needed
  - c) June 27, 2020, 7pm, Town Meeting