

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, July 14, 2020, Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present: Robert Groves, Jim Hemingway, Ajay Khashu, Jim Walton, Susie Mosher, Melody Chartier, George Arvanitis

Members Absent: None

Non-Members present: Becky Torres, Leslie Luchonok, Mike Vinskey, Meryl Mandell, Gary Bernhard, (others?)

1) Open Public Comment

- No problem comments, but Leslie Luchonok requested that the Committee provide additional opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting.

2) Becky Torres shared comments from town moderator, Paul Lyons, discussing his expectations for the FinCom. Letter attached.

3) Committee votes for new Chair and Secretary

- Three members nominated for Chair position: Jim Walton, Susie Mosher, and Robert Groves. Committee voted on each nominee independently. Jim Walton voted as Chair with 4 votes (JW, AK, MC, SM).
- Ajay Khashu voted as Secretary. He was the only nomination for the position.

4) Brief discussion of broadband bond issue. The town treasurer was not able to attend the meeting so full discussion of the issue is postponed to July 21st.

- Jim Hemingway expressed support for renewing the Ban for one more year.

5) 6/16/20 meeting minutes unanimously approved with minor change.

6) 6/18/20 meeting minutes unanimously approved.

7) Ajay Khashu shared general comments about the Committee's budget information session. He felt that it was a very productive exercise for the committee and recommends that the committee hold a similar meeting in advance of next year's town meeting.

- Mike Vinskey public comment: The budget presentation was useful but did not like the webinar format, specifically the process of having to write out and submit questions to the Town Moderator.

8) Meryl Mandell and Gary Bernhard shared information about last year's purchase and installation of the Recycling Committee's storage shed.

- Meryl and Gary indicated a number of concerns about the quality of the shed installation and the lack of exterior paint. The recycling committee would like to sell the shed for its initial purchase price and use those funds to purchase a shed product that they initially preferred from ShedWorks of Belchertown.
- **Motion to allocate \$3,850 to the Recycling Committee for the replacement shed contingent on the town selling the existing Lamore shed at the original purchase price. Motion passes 4-2 (Yea: SM, GA, AK, JW, No: BG, JH, Abstain: MC).**

9) Motion to approve end-of-year transfers from FinCom reserves totaling \$15,755.04. Motion passes unanimously.

10) Motion to transfer \$948.32 to pay bill for replacement of Shutesbury Elementary School burners. Motion passes unanimously.

11) Brief discussion of town meeting

- Committee members were pleased with Board of Health's process and procedures for keeping attendees safe.

12) Discussion about role of public comment during future FinCom meetings.

- SM recommends that the committee utilize same process as SelectBoard and School Committee allowing for 5 minute open comment period.
- BG recommends that the committee keep the process as it is.
- AK recommends that that the committee include some basic language on its agendas articulating expectations for public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.

Written comments from Town Moderator, Paul Lyons:

I want to welcome the new Fincon members and thank you for your willingness to serve the town on one of its most important committees.

I don't want to take up much time, but did want to share a few thoughts with you as we head into what will likely be a challenging year for town budgets across the state.

Town Moderators have been given a significant authority and responsibility in appointing of Fincon members and I take that role very seriously. Some Moderators use their power to influence their town's budgeting and general fiscal direction.

I will NOT do that, but I still have some basic expectations of members. These include:

1. That you actively participate and contribute to the important work that the committee does;
2. That you do not just "rubber stamp" the budget requests that you receive from department heads, committees, etc., but you critically assess the appropriateness of those requests;
3. That you respect each other and remember that you all should share a common goal -i.e., to balance providing the level of services that the townspeople desire with keeping Shutesbury affordable for as many residents as possible.

So, strive to "Be strong and independent advocates for the townspeople"

I don't anticipate that I will be interacting with the committee very much during the year (except as we get close to Town Meeting), but I may tune in to meetings now and then to see how things are going. And remember that just as I ask you not to rubber stamp budget requests, neither will I just rubber stamp member re-appointments. An efficient, functional Fincon requires a level of commitment, cooperation, and participation by its members. That's what I'll be expecting and striving for during my time as Town Moderator.

Thanks for listening.

Paul