

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Wednesday, December 1, 2021, Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Members Absent: None

Town Administrator: Becky Torres

Non-Members present: Ellen McKay (Collector), Tim Hunting (Highway), Mike Vinskey

Meeting called to order at 6:31 PM

1) Tax Collector (Ellen M) Budget Review

- a) The FY23 budget for the tax collector is the same as FY22.
- b) Total proposed budget = \$24,657.
- c) Ellen McKay states that some of the expenses have increased, such as banking and postage fees, but she is confident that she will be able to spend at the same levels as FY21.
- d) JH asks if the computer software is recurring. Ellen explains that it is an annual license and that the vendor pulls data from other systems to generate tax bills as part of their service.
- e) JH asks when the town is audited and by whom. Ellen explains that the audit is done by Scanlon & Associates from Deerfield. BT explains that we will be audited sometime this winter or spring for FY20 and FY21.
- f) JH asks if there is any postage discount since our mailings happen exclusively in Shutesbury. Ellen responds that the town is not equipped to handle the ways Shutesbury could take advantage of some of the techniques to reduce cost.
- g) JH asks what % of Shutesbury taxpayers pay their property tax directly vs. through their bank. Ellen responds that she does not have an answer, but she will investigate it.
- h) Ellen is starting to train Ryan Mailloux tomorrow for the Asst. Collector role.
- i) JW asks how collections are going this year. Ellen responds that she only has one property outstanding for last year.

2) Review Minutes from 11/17/2021

- a) **Motion to approve 11/17/2021 minutes as amended passes unanimously 7-0.**

3) Regional School – 4 town meeting follow-up from 11/20 and prep for 12/11

- a) BG asks if there is any need to meet with the Select Board before the 12/11 meeting. JW responds that it will depend on what the agenda for the meeting will be.
- b) SM states that her impression is that the Regional School Committee may assert a greater role in the process this year and may recommend a method.
- c) Next Select Board meeting is Monday Dec 6. Fin Com will need to meet on 12/8 at 5:30PM w/ Select Board and School Committee members.

- d) BG states that he hopes there will be information shared in the budget about what the trends are in enrollment from member towns. He would like the Shutesbury school committee to do this as well. SM responds that we should keep in mind that the enrollments are still being affected by COVID.
- e) AK states that the Shutesbury contingent was well prepared for the meeting and that came across.

4) Request for Fincom Transfer Asst. Collector position

- a) Our accountant does not want us to move salary amounts from one year to another. We are sitting on a shortfall. BT is requesting a \$1,800 transfer for the Assistant collector salary line.
- b) **SM makes a motion that we move \$1,800 from the Fin Com Reserve fund to address the shortfall in the Asst Collector salary line.** Motion passes unanimously 7-0. Fin Com members will have to sign the transfer at Town Hall.

5) Highway Dept (Tim H) Budget Review

- a) Most lines are level-funded.
- b) There is a small reduction in Highway materials (-\$1,870). There are also small reductions in machinery maintenance (-\$2,000), and Gravel Rd maintenance (-\$2,000).
- c) JH asks what the town spent on snow removal around the lake. Tim responds that it was \$6,375. We also paid W. Clark \$700-\$800 for plowing and sanding Sumner Mountain Rd.
- d) SM asks if fuel costs are in this budget. BT responds that it comes under the Vehicle Fuel line under the General Government budget.
- e) SM asks if the town has had to do an increased amount of maintenance on the roads due to climate change effects. Tim responds that we definitely had some big rains over the summer. If the roads and culverts are well maintained the roads manage well. If in the future we keep getting these major rain events, we might have to up the gravel road maintenance line.
- f) JW asks about catch basin cleaning line. This is a \$1,000 reduction from the FY22 budget. Tim responds that he thinks this will be sufficient.

6) Expense Report Review

- a) There is a new expense report that will be sent today for discussion at our next meeting.

7) Committee Reports

- a) SM for School Committee: They received a draft budget which they approved. SM sent a list of questions which she is waiting to hear back on. Bruce Turner is retiring. U28 is in the process of hiring a new financial director. The budget represents a 2.48% increase from FY22 (+ \$55,545).
- b) BG asks BT for updates on the three current capital projects; Culvert is on hold until Aug/Sep, School had some work done over Thanksgiving. Hoping to have the gym roof project wrapped up over the Winter holiday. HVAC project (no new information).

8) Future Meetings

- a) December 8 – Prep for next 4 Town Meeting w/ Select Board and School Committee
- b) December 14 – Library/Fire

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM