

Shutesbury Finance Committee

Wednesday, January 4, 2023 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present: Ajay Khashu, Bob Groves, Jim Hemingway, Susie Mosher, Jim Walton, George Arvanitis, and ex-officio member, Town Administrator Becky Torres

Members absent: Melody Chartier

Members of the Public: Leslie Luchonok

Meeting called to order at 12:02 pm

1. In light of the Special Town Meeting (STM) warrant that needs to be posted in time for the STM scheduled for Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 6 pm in the gym at the elementary school, the Finance Committee met to vote its recommendation for any STM articles that address money issues.
2. Articles 1 and 2 are in regards to the purchase and conservation restriction on Lot R15. These articles do not change any of the funding recommended by the Finance Committee and passed at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting. After some discussion to understand the STM articles, the

Finance Committee voted 6-0 to recommend Article 1 and voted 5-0 to recommend Article 2 (Bob was temporarily out of the room when the vote was taken.)

3. Article 3 are bylaw amendments to the section 8.10 of the Town of Shutesbury Zoning bylaws, regarding solar regulations. The Finance Committee did not vote on this article.
4. Article 4 is a proposal to transfer \$136,948 from free cash to hire Tighe and Bond, licensed site professionals (LSP) and to fund testing and equipment needed to address PFAS contamination in the area around the town fire station as required by Department of Environmental Protection, (DEP).

A. We looked at a map of the affected area, a spreadsheet detailing the level of contamination and the Point of Entry Treatment System (POETS) that are or will be installed and tested on a regular basis. The town's response may be fine-tuned as more data from testing results come in.

B. Shutesbury's inclusion in a pilot testing program revealed this problem and the town has taken responsibility to provide filtration systems as the testing data points to contaminated sites in the vicinity of the Shutesbury fire station. Many households in this area tested with no detection of PFAS; the testing is continuing. There may have to be a line item in the FY24 budget for replacement filters or more POETS. The Finance Committee may make transfers from its reserve funds in FY23 if necessary.

C. It is expected that other towns will be wrestling with PFAS contamination and there may be future federal, state or legal recourse for funding remediation efforts. Might Shutesbury consider a town water supply? More questions will be raised as the PFAS situation evolves.

The Finance Committee recommended Article 4, by a 6-0 vote.

5. Article 5 is a proposal to transfer \$18,602.50 for VADAR financial software for the Collectors office.

A. In September 2022, Point Software, the town's current tax collection software provider informed its customers that it is selling its business. Our tax collector, Ellen McKay researched options and found advantages to choosing the VADAR tax collecting module.

1. It dovetails with the new VADAR systems in the Treasurer and Accountant's offices making data transfer more seamless,
2. it is cloud-based for better security,
3. the Assistant Tax collector, Ryan Mailloux has been using the VADAR tax collection module it in another town,
4. maintenance costs per year for VADAR are lower than our current costs.

B. A change in software systems can be a demanding task. The town will run the two systems in parallel and start a new fiscal year contract with VADAR in FY24.

The Finance Committee voted 6-0 to recommend this article.

The state certified free cash number is \$1,062,240. We will discuss this further at our next regular meeting, Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 6:30 pm. Members of the Finance Committee are encouraged to attend the STM on 1/19/23.

Meeting adjourned at 1:37 pm.