

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, June 13, 2023 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

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

Members Absent: Bob Groves and George Arvanitis

Members of the Public: Steve Sullivan, Tom Seifert and Mike Vinskey

Finance Committee Meeting called to order at 6:33.

1. Board of Health request for Finance Committee Transfer
 - A. The Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District is operating in good hands with a new director. The data collection was done in FY 22 and FY23. We are responsible for \$5,000 for each of those two years.
 - B. The Board of Health will fund \$1,672 for FY 23 and is requesting Fin Com funds for the remaining balance of \$3,328.
 - C. The PVMCD is offering to reduce the FY 24 fee to \$2,500 for this year only. That will help us meet the \$5,000 bill of prior years for FY 22. That will have to be a warrant article at a Special Town Meeting.
 - D. There are currently over 20 towns enrolled in this program which makes the data base more helpful in tracking serious infectious mosquito borne diseases.
 - E. State Senator Jo Comerford is working to get the testing program state-wide and there maybe some more state support for this program.
 - F. A motion was made and seconded to transfer \$3,328 from Finance Committee Reserves to pay the balance of the FY23 membership fee. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Other transfers for Fire Department and Highway already taken care of.
3. The minutes of May 23, 2023 were passed as amended. The minutes of May 30, 2023 were passed as written.
4. Annual Town Meeting Debrief
 - A. The Chair's presentation went well - it was brief and clear.
 - B. The budget and Annual report were well constructed.
 - C. There were less hot-button issues on the warrant and the weather kept thing cool.
 - D. Next year there will be more effort to get materials from the schools and get information posted on the town website. We can begin putting the information up as it comes in using a dedicated section of the Finance Committee webpage and sending our town announcements to let the public know.

5. Review of Expense Report
 - A. Snow removal, Legal Expenses, Fire Dept. Call wages/Training lines, Heat, and Assessor Clerk were all noted for cost overruns or rebalancing. Line to line transfers will be done at the July 13 meeting with the Select Board.
 - B. A Legal Costs Gift line is being started for donations to help cover the litigation costs with the Planning Board.
6. Topics for the coming fiscal year
 - A. The format of the budget lines will be reconsidered. Paul Lyons, town Moderator, suggested lines could be consolidated to offer departments more flexibility for a less detailed budget. He has seen this in other towns. Fin Com members can research other formats. Jim Walton will talk to Gail Weiss about this topic.
 - B. Michael DeChiara would like some time to discuss the Energy Climate Action Committee's ideas for future possible projects.
 - C. A Chapter 70 funding discussion including community members such as Jay Killough who raised the issue at ATM. We should think of other people to invite to the discussion. Ideas we generate will be passed on to our state Representative, Aaron Saunders.
 - D. We will discuss how to address the capital stabilization fund which is low right now.
 - E. The future Capital Plan items need to be reviewed by the Capital Planning Committee. Making the deadline date for items to be considered needs to be communicated with departments.
 - F. We discussed the possibility of working out a Finance Committee Liaison person for each of the main departments, (Fire, Police, Highway, Schools) to facilitate more communication with each department during the budgeting process.

Our next meeting is THURSDAY, July 13, at 6:30 with some time reserved for the joint line transfers Select Board.

Our meeting adjourned at 7:50.