

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

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

Finance Committee Meeting called to order at 5:35

1. The Committee welcomed our newly appointed member, April Stein. April has had a lot of experience in Shutesbury government, previously serving on the Finance Committee and the Select Board. She is currently serving as a member of the Personnel Board and as an Assessor. We are looking forward to working with her and will benefit from her experience and perspectives.
2. The minutes of the 6/13/23 Finance Committee meeting were approved as written.
3. Review and discuss alternative budget formats
 - a. People received links to other towns' budget presentations. Continuing with most of detailed lines in our current format will allow historical comparison and monitoring. Some lines might be folded together as we did for the Fire Departments equipment items. The current Expense Reports provide a lot of detail.
 - b. We discussed whether broader budget lines, such as salaries/operating does or does not encourage more careful budget proposals and spending. Would broader categories give useful flexibility to department heads?
 - c. It may be possible to work with two different budget presentations: the current one for the department requests that the Fin Com and the town accountant uses as a working document, and another less detailed budget presented and voted on at Annual Town Meeting as Paul Lyons suggested.
 - d. Becky will clarify with Gail Weiss if this dual system can meet the accountant's legal requirements. We can have a subcommittee work on this after further discussion of the formats at our next meeting.
4. Liaisons for town departments
 - a. We decided to try a system of liaisons for 4 departments and the financial team, (Fire, Highway, Police, School, and the financial team in Town Hall – Accountant, Assessor, Collector, and Treasurer. The liaison role is to facilitate communication regarding the process, paperwork, timeframes, and answer questions. The liaison can help get information back to the Fin Com. The liaisons are neither budget reviewers nor advocates for the departments.

- b. The liaisons are Jim Walton for Fire Department, April for the Police Department, Bob for the Highway Department, Susie for the Schools, and George for the financial team.
 - c. The budget letter and form will go out both on line and on paper.
- 5. Finance Committee assignments
 - a. Ajay Khashu was nominated to be the chair for the coming year. Susie Mosher was nominated to take the minutes. Both were supported unanimously and accepted. Each of them want other people to consider the seats following this 2023 – 2024 season.
- 6. Fiscal year end fund transfers
 - a. The Select Board was not able to join us. They will review the list and vote at their Wednesday, July 19 meeting.
 - b. The budget transfers from underspent lines to overspent lines came to a total of \$55,295.55
 - c. We discussed whether transferring from the underspent lines in the same budget section as the overspent lines would be preferable. Some final bills may not be in from some of the underspent lines. An underspent budget line such as health insurance provides a sure, final balance to draw from. Next year's budget document will show us the actual spending of each line and will not confuse these transfers as expenses. We may want to discuss the best way to clear before the closing out FY24. A narrative may be included in the minutes to clarify the transfers/expenditures.
 - d. Members need to sign the transfer form in the Finance Committee mailbox as soon as possible.
- 7. Next meeting
 - a. Is scheduled for Tuesday, July 25 at 5:30 pm.
 - b. Agenda items include: Follow up discussion on budget formats, any lessons learned from FY23 Finance Committee reserve fund transfers, Conservation Commission letter, PFAS loan and spending,

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.