

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, July 16, 2024 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present: Ajay Khashu - chair, George Arvanitis, Bob Groves, Susie Mosher, Jim Hemingway, Kathy Salvador, and April Stein

Attending: Town Administrator Becky Torres

Meeting called to order at 6:50 p.m.

I. Minutes from 6/27/24 approved as amended

II. New member, Kathy Salvador, welcomed and introduced

- A. Has Been in Shutesbury since 2006
- B. Was Head of Human Resources at Smith and Wesson – retired after 43 years
- C. Was on the board of Lake Wyola Association

III. Recap of meeting with Amherst Town Council President, Lynn Griesemer, Andy Steinberg, and Bob Hegner ATC/Finance Committee, Ajay Khashu, Shutesbury Finance Committee Chair and Rita Farrell, Shutesbury Select Board Co-Chair, re: Regional School Budget

- A. Amherst is planning to start at a 2.5% increase for the FY26 Regional School budget
- B. 6% increase is not sustainable for towns
- C. The four town meeting process will start in August and meet every other month to work out a budget
- D. An initial level services budget with projected 2.5% increase will be projected early to understand the projected gap.
- E. Attendees agreed that the statutory assessment formula should be restored.
- F. Regional School Committee has a budget sub-committee examining all aspects of the budget
- G. Amherst College is not likely to make a significant increase from current agreement of \$85K; maybe up to \$100K
- H. Amherst has no excess levy capacity. An override is unlikely to be a ballot option
- I. Ajay and Susie will make an introductory visit to the new Superintendent, Dr. Herman

IV. Fin Com assignments

- A. Ajay Khashu was nominated and approved unanimously as Chair
- B. George Arvanitis was nominated and approved unanimously as Secretary
- C. Kathy Salvador was nominated and approved unanimously as Personnel Board representative
- D. Bob Groves and George Arvanitis were nominated and approved unanimously as Capital Planning representatives
- E. Volunteers for departments liaisons are:

Susie Mosher – Elementary School and Fire, Ajay Khashu – Regional School and financial team (Accountant, Treasurer, Tax Collector and Assessors), Bob Groves - Highway, Jim Hemingway - Broadband, and April Stein – Police

V. FY24 closeout

A. \$17,055.90 in end-of-the-year invoices that went over budget were identified. Sanitary Landfill – \$3,000, Trash Hauler gas cost increase -\$7,150, Veterans’ program – \$116.35, Fire Dept. Training wages - \$1,523.64, Assessor’s Clerk - \$5,265.91. Some of these cost increases are likely to reoccur in FY25 as well

B. The committee voted unanimously to transfer this amount from the remaining FY24 Finance Reserve Fund, leaving \$958. For the year. Since we allocated 20K less for this line in FY25, we may need a warrant article at a Special Town meeting to increase the Fin Com Reserve line or to pay for identified unanticipated costs out of cash reserves

Our next meeting will be on August 6, 2024 at 6:30. We adjourned at 8:05 pm