

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Four Town Meeting
Saturday, September 28, 2024; Amherst Regional Middle School Library,

Members Present: - chair, April Stein, Susie Mosher, Jim Hemingway, Kathy Salvador and George Arvanitis Absent: Ajay Khashu and Bob Groves Attending: Town Administrator Becky Torres, Selectboard members: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, Rita Farrel and Eric Stocker and School Committee members: Anna Heard (regional rep.) and Jeremy Mailloux

Meeting called to order at 9:05 a.m.

- I. Amherst Pelham Regional School Superintendent presented six budget scenarios
 - A. Budget goal is to provide budget that meets the basic needs of the students. The superintendent described this as not ideal, but the best that can be expected given the current economic climate
 - B. Showed the FY25 school costs, by middle school, high School and district level spending
 - C. Presented six separate budget scenarios, all of which showed the deficits ranging from \$2,195k to \$3,328k
 - D. Presented a plan for cutting costs by consolidating the middle school and high school students into the high school building. These cuts amounted to \$2,374k
 - E. Showed how the spending cuts would impact each of the six scenarios and the resulting surplus and deficits for each. The range of impacts was from a surplus of \$177k to a deficit of \$618k. Only one scenario shows a surplus
 - F. Showed other possible cost cutting options
- II. There was a breakout session where each town discussed among themselves, what had been presented
- III. Towns' Follow-up Comments and Questions
 - A. Amherst requested that data regarding historical student population, including by student makeup, be provided to identify trends. They stated that they cannot fund amounts above their FY25 assessment unless the FY25 base is adjusted down by the added 2% assessment amount from ARPA (American Rescue Plan) funds. Amherst also mentioned the negative fiscal impacts of charter schools on the budget
 - B. Leverett does not believe the base should be adjusted and supports the scenarios (1 and 2) with no adjustments to the base
 - C. Shutesbury recognizes that it's early in the process, but supports the scenarios with no adjustments to the base
 - D. Pelham had no questions or comment

Next Four Town Meeting will be in November or December

Meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.