

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, April 29, 2025 Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present: Ajay Khashu - chair, April Stein, Bob Groves, Susie Mosher, Kathy Salvador, Jim Hemingway and George Arvanitis Absent: None Attending: Hayley Bolton – Town Administrator, Leslie Bracebridge - Assessors Clerk, Melissa Makepeace O’Neil – Selectboard member

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

- I. Reviewed and approved the minutes of the 4/22/25 meeting, as amended
- II. FY26 Budget Update
 - A. The Library Building project is delayed and there will not be an interest payment in FY26. The interest and related debt exclusion revenue were changed to zero in the budget
 - B. Clean Water Trust informed the town that we are no longer eligible for the CWT emergency funding - an interest-free loan from the trust. Shutesbury is responsible for the costs of PFAS mitigation
 - i. Jo Comerford’s office is aware of this and will reach out to the trust on Shutesbury’s behalf to try to access the interest free loan program
 - ii. Alternative funding options noted:
 1. Borrow another \$150k through regular process, with interest
 2. Transfer from the Stabilization fund
 3. Wait to see the result of Jo Comerford’s effort
 4. We can have a special town meeting for the first two options if this is not resolved for the annual town meeting
 - iii. Agreed to change the existing annual town meeting warrant article that transfers \$50k from Free Cash to the PFAS Mitigation fund, to transfer \$150k: \$50k from Free Cash & \$100k from the Stabilization fund
 - iv. The Finance Committee unanimously approved recommending the warrant article to transfer the \$150k to the PFAS mitigation fund
 - C. The highway superintendent requested that the Grader repair cost of \$16,600 be funded from reserves. A warrant Article was created to transfer this amount from Free Cash. The Finance Committee voted to recommend it, unanimously
 - D. The town discovered the Inspector of Animals service is for dog officer duties only:
 - i. \$5,818 was moved from the Inspector of Animals line to the Dog Officer line
 - ii. Voted to budget the Inspector of Animals line at \$1,000
- III. Budget Review
 - A. Discussed adding the estimated tax rate and average single family tax bill on the revenue sheet. This will be added to the next iteration of the budget
 - B. Discussed the concept of using cash reserves to fund the budget
 - C. The committee unanimously approved Article 3: The Town of Shutesbury FY26 operating budget totaling \$7,678,806

- IV. Reviewed and voted on the finance related Annual Town Meeting warrant articles
- A. Article 2: The Amherst- Pelham Regional School District FY26 budget and assessment method - Finance Committee voted to recommend - unanimously
 - B. The Finance Committee voted to recommend the following - unanimously:
 - i. Article 4: Salary compensation for all elected officials of the town as contained in the FY26 operating budget
 - ii. Article 5: Compensating Balance Agreements
 - iii. Article 6: Accept and Expend Grants
 - iv. Article 7: Allow Catherine Hilton, Board of Health, to serve as a consultant and as an elected official -
 - v. Article 8: Allow Walter Tibbetts, Cemetery Commission, to serve as a Cemetery Groundskeeper and as an elected official
 - vi. Article 9: Revolving Fund Annual Spending limits
 - C. Article 11: Transfer from Free Cash \$11,400 for a new mower - Finance Committee voted to recommend – unanimously
 - D. Article 11B: Transfer from Free Cash \$16,600 for the Grader repair- Finance Committee voted to recommend – unanimously
 - E. Article 12: Transfer from Free Cash \$8,648 to replace the fire alarm system at Town Hall - Finance Committee voted to recommend - unanimously
 - F. Article 13: Transfer from Free Cash \$10,000 for needed Town Hall meeting room repairs - Finance Committee voted to recommend – unanimously
 - G. Article 14: Transfer from Free Cash \$8,000 to allow the Select Board to provide matching funds for a grant that funds improvements to the Lake Wyola recreation area – Finance Committee voted to recommend – unanimously
 - H. Article 15: Transfer from Free Cash \$30,000 for Legal expenses to support Shutesbury in the Solar bylaw litigation - Finance Committee voted to recommend – unanimously. Ajay will reach out to the Planning Board regarding their sponsoring this article
 - I. The Finance Committee voted to recommend the following - unanimously:
 - i. Article 16: Appropriate \$41,357 of the FY2025 MLP certified retained earnings to the MLP FY26 Emergency Reserve Fund
 - ii. Article 17: Appropriate \$379,330 for the MLP Enterprise FY26 Budget
- V. Other Business
- A. Police Chief Contract has not been completed
 - B. Ajay will ask the Town Accountant to implement the new report she offered as an alternative to purchasing Open Checkbook

Next meetings are May 6, 2025 with the Selectboard (in person at town hall) and May 13 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.