Shutesbury Finance Committee
Thursday, October 1, 2026
Virtual Meeting

FinCom Members Present: Ajay Khashu - chair, George Arvanitis, Frank McGinn, Susie Mosher, Molly Moss, Meredith Pustell, and Laura Soito

Staff and Guests Attending: Hayley Bolton – Town Administrator, Ellen McKay – Tax Collector, Leslie Luchonok

Ajay Khashu called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

I. Review and Vote on Special Town Meeting (STM) articles
   A. Khashu explained that each article with financial implication requires a committee recommendation. The stabilization balance is $112,185.50. Free cash cannot be used at Special Town Meeting because it has not yet been certified.
   B. Article 1. Prior Year Bills
      i. The article would transfer funds from Stabilization to pay two FY25 bills: a Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District membership fee ($5,000) and an Alert 360 alarm monitoring bill with late fees ($238.40), submitted through McCarthy, Burgess and Wolff. It requires a 9/10 vote.
      ii. In response to a question about where the mosquito district bill went, it was explained that the district's clerical error meant the town did not receive it in time to process. Bolton, who serves on the district's board, said the matter will be addressed at STM, and future bills will go to the Board of Health.
      iii. VOTE: McGinn motioned to recommend Article 1. Mosher seconded. Arvanitis: aye, Khashu: aye, McGinn: aye, Mosher: aye, Moss: aye, Pustell: aye, Soito: aye; motion carried.
   C. Articles 2 and 3: Community impact fee (short-term rentals).
      i. Bolton stated that the town previously adopted the short-term rental chapter but not the community impact fee. She estimated that there are about 25 properties that could generate $5,000 in total revenue. Members discussed how the fee would be billed, clarified that short-term is under 30 days, and how it differs from the existing occupancy tax.
      ii. VOTE: Arvanitis motioned to recommend Articles 2 and 3. Pustell seconded. Arvanitis: aye, Khashu: aye, McGinn: aye, Mosher: aye, Moss: aye, Pustell: aye, Soito: aye; motion carried.
   D. Articles 4 and 5: Voluntary funds funded by donations on tax and excise bills.

i. Article 4 would establish a municipal scholarship or educational fund and Article 5 would establish a fund to aid the elderly and disabled.
ii. Bolton identified that authorization would allow the option for these funds to be collected, but did not mean that it would be pursued.
iii. McKay raised concerns related to lockbox payment rejections, online banking, fees associated with reformatting the billing statement, and tracking donors.
iv. Mosher raised that the structure of the funds, including their distribution, has not been worked out.
v. Arvanitis questioned the need to vote given that there is no budgetary or revenue impact. Soito noted that there would be costs associated with implementation, though it was agreed that these could be addressed later.
vi. The committee made no recommendations on Articles 4 and 5.

E. Article 6: Special education reserve fund
i. Mosher identified that the language for this warrant came from Erving. The school committee would allocate the funds, which could include late-arriving state aid such as rural aid. Expenditures from fund will require a vote of both the School Committee and Select Board.
ii. The balance is capped at 2% of net school spending, about $55,000 at current levels, and the Treasurer invests the fund and credits the interest. Arvanitis asked whether the cap is too low. Mosher said she believes the cap is set by statute, and members could look into whether it can be modified.
iii. The idea came from earlier committee discussion about managing spikes in out-of-district costs.
iv. Members asked how it would be funded, and it was noted that the school committee has flexibility, and it is not expected that this will be funded by appropriation.
v. VOTE: Mosher motioned to recommend Article 6. McGinn seconded. Arvanitis: aye, Khashu: aye, McGinn: aye, Mosher: aye, Moss: aye, Pustell: aye, Soito: aye; motion carried.

F. Article 7. CPA grant
i. Would like the remaining funds from the West Quabbin Woodlands Conservation Area project that were not spent to be returned to the CPA open space and recreation fund.
ii. VOTE: Pustell motioned to recommend Article 7. Arvanitis seconded. Arvanitis: aye, Khashu: aye, McGinn: aye, Mosher: aye, Moss: aye, Pustell: aye, Soito: aye; motion carried.

G. Article 8. Acceptance of bequeathed property at 41 Cooleyville Road.

i. Moss asked whether a recommendation is needed, since no money is being spent. Khashu indicated that the article has financial implications and the committee chose to proceed with a vote.
ii. Bolton stated that the town plans to sell the property "as is" with the proceeds going to free cash.
iii. VOTE: Moss motioned to recommend article 8. Pustell seconded. Arvanitis: aye, Khashu: aye, McGinn: aye, Mosher: aye, Moss: aye, Pustell: aye, Soito: aye; motion carried.

H. Article 9 – Amendment to the Personnel Bylaw (removal of the Holidays section).
i. The article is administrative and does not require a committee vote.
ii. Khashu will send the committee's recommendations to Bolton and administrative assistant Mailloux for the warrant.

I. Other business.
i. Mosher will bring the committee's letter to the information table at the Town birthday party and members agreed.
ii. Next meeting was moved to October 19th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

VOTE: McGinn motioned to adjourn. Arvanitis seconded. Arvanitis: aye, Khashu: aye, McGinn: aye, Mosher: aye, Moss: aye, Pustell: aye, Soito: aye; motion carried.

Exhibit Summary

- Special Town Meeting Warrant, October 17, 2026