Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, August 18, 2026
Virtual Meeting

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

Staff and Guests Attending: none.

Ajay Khashu called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

I. Review and approval of meeting minutes
   A. VOTE: Khashu motioned to approve the minutes from August 3rd as amended. Arvanitis seconded. Arvanitis: aye, Khashu: aye, McGinn: aye, Mosher: aye, Pustell: aye, Soito: aye; motion carried.

II. Tighe and Bond contract extension
   A. Khashu shared an email response from Tighe and Bond to the Town Administrator regarding our questions and there was continued confusion around sample counts and growth of costs as presented in the proposal.
   B. Select Board has already approved the extension to comply with PFAS-related obligations.
   C. FinCom responsibility is not to review contracts or oversee the procurement process, rather to understand PFAS mitigation costs, determine how to fund them, and incorporate them into our long-range plan and FY28 budget.
   D. Additional information, such as a list of homes being tested and costs itemized into categories, may help us to prepare for projecting future costs.
   E. Need to ensure that we have adequate funding to cover associated costs, including components that are included and not included in the contracted services.
   F. There is not currently a budget line for ongoing PFAS mitigation costs because it has been funded like a capital project and covered with loan or free cash reserves.
   G. Estimate of costs that are not anticipated to be covered by existing loan funds will be needed for Special Town Meeting.

III. Special Town Meeting warrant items under consideration

A. Khashu asked the Town Administrator prior to the meeting if there were any anticipated warrant items for Special Town Meeting. Preliminarily, there could be warrants related to:
   i. Prior year bills that need to be addressed
   ii. PFAS mitigation
   iii. Highway department salt shed
      1. Building Committee is interested in hiring an engineer to investigate lifting the salt shed. There has been a change in truck used for delivery of salt to the Highway Department. Raising the building could restore the ability to have salt delivered into the building rather than dumped in front and pushed in or replacing the building at an anticipated higher cost. Suggested that this request go through the proper CapPlan process.
B. Mosher indicated that School Committee has already voted on establishing a Special Education Stabilization Fund (SPED) that will be sent to the Town Administrator. Warrant article will provide authorization for the fund, not funding which will need to be determined later in the year.

IV. <u>FY 28 budget request letter and timeline</u>
   A. Committee coordination
      i. Last year it was proposed that a joint Select Board, FinCom, and CapPlan meeting be held early in the process. This could be an opportunity for us to share our long-range planning tool and how we are planning to use it, for CapPlan to provide an update on their plan, and the group to establish shared expectations and context for another tricky year.
      ii. Alternatively, liaisons to CapPlan can keep us up to date on this committee's developments, the Town Administrator could attend our meetings and act as a liaison to Select Board, and we can utilize Fiscal Summit to share and collaborate around budget. Joint meeting could still be requested by Select Board if they feel that additional engagement in budget development is needed.
   B. Budget letter timeline
      i. Last year's calendar was delayed due to preparations for Special Town Meeting. Budget letters were not sent until November 5th and the proposal due date was November 30th. Fiscal Summit was held on October 21st.
      ii. For this year the desire is to have the budget letter out by October 5th with proposed due date of November 13th. Fiscal Summit could be held between when letter is sent and due date.
         1. Noted that Highway Department would like to hold their meeting with FinCom prior to snow if possible.

C. Khashu has shared draft for FY28, and the committee should read and bring suggestions to next meeting.

V. Long range financial plan tool

A. Long range fiscal plan tool feedback

i. For assessments, Arvanitis provided a PDF copy to the Assessor to review. Assessment values have been highly variable, so it is difficult to determine a long-range number. From the Department of Local Services Shutesbury's average increase in assessed value is 6.8% over the last nine years, but there are some very high numbers. The assessor is catching up on permits, so can expect that new growth will be higher. Discussed whether it may make sense to separate new growth from valuation.

B. Email feedback to Khashu to compile for group discussion at our next meeting.

VI. Next Meeting

A. Next meeting on August 31st.

i. Continue to work on budget letter.

ii. Continue work on long range financial plan tool.

iii. Special Town Meeting updates.

iv. Explore pathways for the school project.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

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

Exhibit Summary

1. Meeting minutes for August 3, 2026
2. Tighe and Bond email regarding questions
3. Long Range Fiscal Planning Tool
4. FY27 dept budget discussion schedule
5. FY27 FinCom budget request letter
6. FY28 FinCom budget request letter draft