

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
Hybrid Meeting

FinCom Members Present: Ajay Khashu - chair, George Arvanitis, Frank McGinn, and Laura Soito (virtual)

Staff and Guests Attending: Hayley Bolton - Town Administrator; Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil- Selectboard, Eric Stocker – Selectboard

See Selectboard minutes for FY28 Budget Process Check-In as copied below:

Finance Committee called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

- a. Khashu stated that a Budget Request Letter was drafted and sent out to Committees/Boards asking them to draft and submit realistic FY28 budgets, noting any drastic increases by November 13th.
- b. The Finance Committee plans to host two fiscal summits with one in the Fall (late October, early November) and one in 2027 (late January, early February) after draft budgets are received. Each department will have an assigned Finance Committee liaison.
- c. The Finance Committee is working on a five-year financial planning forecast tool that projects budgets out to FY32. This will help generate estimates for state aid and local aid. It uses historical information for its basis and helps generate the tax levy, as well as identify trends.
- d. Khashu stated they used \$200,000 of free cash reserves to moderate the impact of the levy on taxpayers for the FY27 budget. Khashu mentioned PFAS is no longer a one-time cost, but rather is a recurring thing, so they will be looking at building it into the Town's Annual Operating Budget as a PFAS Mitigation line.
- e. Khashu stated the Town will need to strategize and work on building up the Capital Stabilization Fund in a way that is sustainable.
- f. Arvanitis stated that FY28 is going to be a challenge, and managing tax bills is going to be hard. There has been a \$500 increase per average single-family tax bill over the last two years. Arvanitis clarified that \$500 is not a fixed goal. Also, the actual impact varies by property value.
- g. Bolton stated our Free Cash projection is currently in the six figures, which is good news. The bad news is that it cannot be used for the Warrant Articles at the upcoming Special Town Meeting. Stabilization funds may need to be used.
- h. Khashu emphasized the importance of communicating fiscal challenges early and repeatedly so residents are not surprised at Town Meeting.

Finance Committee adjourned their meeting at 6:30 pm.