

Shutesbury Finance Committee  
Tuesday, May, 26 2026, Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Ajay Khashu - chair, Susie Mosher, April Stein, Laura Soito, Jim Walton, Molly Moss, and Hayley Bolton – Town Administrator; Absent: George Arvanitis; Non-Members Attending: None

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.

- I. Reviewed line to line budget transfers recommended by Gail Weiss, Town Accountant
  - A. \$11,250 Assessors Clerk – Clerk overtime to cover office duties. Transferred from unused Administrative Assessor salary budget line
  - B. \$10,000 Electricity – Library Solar panels started later in FY26. Transferred from unused portion of Health Insurance budget line
  - C. \$4,000 Heating – colder winter, increased heating costs. Transferred from unused County Health District budget line
  - D. \$116.79 Emergency Management Phone Notification - contract went over budget. Transferred from unused portion of Franklin Regional Council of Governments, (FRCOG) budget line
  - E. \$100.14 Electrical inspection expenses – certification costs higher than expected. Transferred from unused portion of FRCOG budget line
  - F. \$300 Highway Longevity bonus – not in FY26 budget. Transferred from unused portion of Highway wages budget line
  - G. \$100 Library Longevity Bonus - not in FY26 budget. Transferred from unused portion of FRCOG budget line
- II. Other budget overrun items to consider
  - A. \$100,732 Snow and Ice - winter storms and salt and sand cost increases. Fin Com recommends applying remaining Fin Com reserves \$47,485 and the balance needed, \$53,247 to be transferred from unused portion of Health Insurance, Town Clerk, and County Health District budget lines
  - B. \$1,000 Building Supplies - increasing costs to be transferred from unused portions of Health Insurance, Town Clerk, and County Health District budget lines
  - C. Call Wages for Fire Dept. – already voted a Fin Com transfer of \$5,500 at April 28 meeting
  - D. Veteran Benefits budget line will need \$2,500 – 3,500. New veteran enrollee. Transfer from Health Insurance, Town Clerk, and County Health District budget lines
  - E. Some of these costs have already been adjusted in the FY27 budget plan. We discussed the process for longevity bonuses that were not included in the fall budget proposals. We will incorporate a sentence to remind departments to include these costs in their proposals. It would be helpful if the Personnel Board would develop a chart of upcoming longevity bonuses.
- III. PFAS expenses for FY27 and beyond
  - A. Tighe & Bond, (T&B) submitted a contract proposal to continue PFAS sampling, monitoring and reporting services for FY27, FY28, and FY29

- B. Currently our PFAS budget balance is \$103,819 as shown on page 12 in the May 21, 2026 expense report. T&B proposed \$106,000 for FY27.
  - C. The testing rate is semi-annual, changed from quarterly testing. Clarification of how many houses, filters, etc., is needed
  - D. The previous T&B project manager, Jeffery Arps, retired. Hayley will look into the elements of the T&B proposal and check if this is a competitive bid for services.
  - E. There is some proposed state legislation that may help towns meet the costs of testing
  - F. The principal costs for the PFAS loan was not on the final FY27 budget document. Ajay will check with our treasurer, Ryan, about this.
  - G. PFAS is an ongoing operating expense, not a capital expense. We should start an operating budget line for PFAS in the FY28 budget
- IV. Highway Unpaved Roads Grant Program
- A. Shutesbury did not win the FY 26 grant to purchase a new road grader. Our town was invited to apply again in the future. What is that timeline?
  - B. George will talk with Dave Grenier, Highway Superintendent, about possible contingencies. Share a grader with another town? Rely on our old grader? Use Ch. 90 funds?
  - C. Dave has Ch. 90 paving plans scheduled. The current balances in Ch.90 on the 5/21/26 expense report are: FY25 \$82,480 FY26 \$385,718. The likely appropriation for FY27 will be the same as FY26 = 385,718. T = \$854,517
- V. Capital Projects at the School
- A. There will be a meeting at SES on June 10 at 9 a.m. to review the multiple, overlapping possible capital plans at the school. Anne Magill, Ajay, Hayley, Nate Longcope, a representative from ECAC and the Buildings committees will discuss the sequence/timeline for grants, town funding and the possible costs for these projects.
  - B. Berkshire Design Group has already begun the engineering study and scope of work for the parking lot, a request that was funded at our May 2026 Annual Town Meeting
  - C. Other projects such as ground source heat pumps, water storage tank, fate of the current oil tank, and patching the driveway/parking lot will need engineering studies, proposals, and funding identified.
- VI. Finance Committee Openings
- A. The Moderator is looking for recommendations to fill two vacancies on the Fin Com
  - B. Areas of expertise that will be helpful are: Building construction/maintenance, familiarity with personnel management, comfortable with numbers and budgeting, and economic development, especially for small communities.
  - C. Thanks to Forbes Library, Molly Moss will be attending a series of workshops sponsored by Massachusetts Municipal Association in partnership with Suffolk University concerning many facets of municipal government.
- VII. Finance Committee Summer Projects
- A. The fall and winter schedule is too busy to tackle some research and development of tools that will make our work easier and more transparent.
  - B. The long range budget planning spreadsheet begun by George, Ajay, and Hayley needs to be further developed. With the input of different assumptions for annual budget increases, capital costs, use of cash reserves, and revenue projections, we can look at how these forces might shape our future budget proposals. After some development, this tool can be shared with the Select Board to keep them apprised of the possible outlook for the town

- C. Capital Planning will continue their update of a long range capital plan. Items to track, timelines, and cost projections will be examined. The Select Board also wants the important information and guidance this updated document can provide.
- D. The Personnel Board will start meetings in July to talk with employees in order to update job descriptions, hours, and salaries. The goal is to have an article for the fall Special Town Meeting with salary updates. We will need to have a Finance Committee representative to join this important work.
- E. OPEB will have an actuarial study completed and this budget line will need to be reviewed later in FY27.

Our next virtual meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2026 at 6:30. We will finish up any FY26 transfers needed. Meeting adjourned at 8:55