

Shutesbury Finance Committee
Tuesday, July 14, 2026
Town Hall

Members Present: Ajay Khashu - chair, Frank McGinn, Susie Mosher, Meredith Pustell, Laura Soito and George Arvanitis; Absent: Molly Moss; Non-Members Attending: Hayley Bolton – Town Administrator

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

I. New members welcome and introduction

- A. All members introduced themselves and described their backgrounds
- B. Ajay described what the new members can expect as members of the committee and noted that it typically takes time to learn how the town's budget process works
- C. Ajay described how committee members contribute to the FinCom
- D. Hayley described resources available to Finance Committees. She will distribute info about these resources to the committee members
- E. Susie described the various FinCom communications to the community throughout the year
- F. Ajay provided a high-level view of the FY27 budget process and the changes made to the process that year. The focus of the changes were transparency and collaboration
- G. Ajay noted that the Town Administrator provided help with formatting and supplementing our communications

II. New member onboarding

- A. Ajay described training sessions for new members before the budget season begins
- B. There will be four sessions:
 - i. Budget review (walk through) and budget process discussion – lead by George
 - ii. Budget process and state fiscal policy that is relevant to the town finances – lead by Laura
 - iii. School budgets – lead by Ajay
 - iv. Make up of town staffing, departments, boards and committees – lead by Susie
- C. Each leader will email Frank and Meredith to schedule their sessions which will take place at town hall

III. Discussed meeting scheduling

- A. Typically, we don't meet at the same time as the Selectboard
- B. Ajay will send a poll to the committee members to determine our meeting schedule for the FY28 budget process. The options will be:
 - i. 1st and 3rd Monday of the month
 - ii. 2nd and 4th Monday of the month
 - iii. 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month
 - iv. 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month
 - v. 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month
- C. Committee agreed to continue meeting at 6:30 p.m.

IV. FY27 Committee organization and assignments

A. Statutory Assignments:

- i. Chair of the committee: The committee unanimously voted for Ajay
- ii. Secretary: The committee unanimously voted for Laura
- iii. Capital Planning:
 - 1. The committee unanimously voted for Frank
 - 2. The committee unanimously voted for George
- iv. Personnel Board Representative: The committee unanimously voted for Meredith

B. Liaison to town departments:

- i. Elementary School - Susie
- ii. Highway Department - George
- iii. Regional School - Ajay
- iv. Fire Department – Ajay will ask Molly
- v. Police Department - Ajay will ask Molly
- vi. Library - Ajay will ask Molly

C. Assigned the ongoing public communications to Ajay and Hayley

D. Unfunded costs

- i. FY26 unfunded budget lines with costs:
 - 1. Custodian Longevity Bonus - \$500
 - 2. Highway Superintendent Longevity Bonus - \$300
- ii. The FY26 unfunded budget lines will be covered by year end line-item transfers
- iii. Items that had not been funded in the FY27 budget:
 - 1. Fire Chief Longevity Bonus- \$300
 - 2. Accountant Longevity Bonus - \$500
 - 3. Library Aid Longevity Bonus - \$150
 - 4. Employment lines for Union 28 office employees were not funded. The costs for Retirement, Medicare, Health Insurance and unemployment were underfunded in total by \$7,635. These are funded in the Retirement expense line
- iv. FinCom reserve fund transfers were recommended to fund the FY27 unfunded items:
 - 1. Voted unanimously to transfer \$7,635 from the FinCom Reserve Fund to the Retirement expense line
 - 2. Voted unanimously to transfer \$950 from the FinCom Reserve Fund to the three Longevity Bonus lines noted above (D. iii., 1-3)

V. FY26 Wrap-up

- A. The elementary school is expected to underspend its budget by \$140k. The details will be provided once the books are closed
- B. The Governor's supplemental budget added rural aid funds for FY26 and will fund rural aid in FY27 at the same level as FY26. The FY26 amount can be spent in FY27
- C. The Governor approved for each town with Quabbin land, the payment of \$50k in FY27 and again in FY28. Susie described the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority meeting held recently at the Quabbin visitors center and how it addressed the payment in lieu of taxes for these towns with Quabbin land

- D. The state's FY27 budget has been approved and the state aid for Shutesbury is greater than the amount assumed in the FinCom budget
- E. The Middle School roof bid is under the approved budget amount. The region is requesting the towns submit a letter allowing the region not to return the savings to the member towns until the project is complete. Ajay will follow up on this request with the Shutesbury regional school representative and the regional finance director

VI. Other Business

- A. Discussed posting meetings:
 - i. Many meetings will be posted once the meeting schedule is determined
 - ii. Agreed that the Secretary will monitor meeting postings to be sure they are posted on time
 - iii. Decided to meet virtually with occasional hybrid meetings
- B. Noted the roles of the Capital Planning and Finance Committees' roles in the capital budgeting process:
 - i. Capital Planning Committee role:
 - 1. Reviews capital requests and either approves or denies them
 - 2. Must provide a report of the capital requests submitted
 - 3. Must describe the impact, timing and need of the requests
 - ii. FinCom role:
 - 1. Need to approve the capital plan
 - 2. Identify funding sources
 - iii. These rules will be discussed in detail in the future
- C. Discussed the need to meet more regularly with the Treasurer. We'll plan to have him join our meetings every fourth FinCom meeting

Next meeting to be determined based on polling and will be virtual

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.