

**Shutesbury Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes**  
**March 24, 2015**

Members present: Elaine Puleo/Chair, April Stein and Mike Vinskey  
Staff present: Rebecca Torres/Town Administrator, Linda Avis Scott/Admin.  
Secretary

Meeting opened at the Shutesbury Town Hall by Puleo/Chair at 6:32pm

Guests: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neill, Michael DeChiara, Nic Reitzel, Gail Fleischaker, George Arvanitis, Deacon Bonnar, Allen Hanson, Jeff Lacy, Paul Lyons, Susie Mosher, Mary Anne Antonellis, Dale Houle, Sharon Raymond, Robert Raymond, Sally Fairfield, Kate Cell, Julie Stepanek, and Ria Windcaller/all residents; Judi Barrett/RKG Associates, Inc.

Appointments:

6:35pm Police Chief Harding

6:45pm Nic Reitzel/Engineer

7:00pm Judi Barrett/Vision Consultant

Topics

1. **Chief Harding:** Per Crocker, the best place for uninterrupted power supplies (UPS) in Town Hall is in the copy room. Chief's concern is lack of security for this space; notes need for finance office to have UPS's. Crocker set up the police office network; subsequently, police department phones will be separated out from other phones in Town Hall. Sergeant Masiuk will be on leave for surgery from 4/10/15 through the end of May; the schedule is laid out to minimize the use of over-time by the department for the six-week duration of her leave. New auxiliary staff lacks experience and will have further training; was previously a corrections officer. Masiuk has paid time to cover her leave. 6:46 Chief Harding leaves the meeting.
  
2. **Montague Road/Vinskey and Reitzel:** Vinskey states that in thinking about all roads, town infrastructure, and potential solutions, he toured Montague Road with Reitzel. Reitzel: eight-year West Pelham Road resident and licensed civil engineer with expertise in road maintenance including bridge replacements; has worked with small communities to assist with grants/financing. Per Reitzel, other roads in town have issues similar to those on Montague Road; has visited 70-80 communities with similar issues in obtaining funding, following processes and procedures required by funding sources; understands the constraints of town budgets. Reitzel: purpose is to be of assistance with state permitting, putting together projects, providing guidance on how to work within the system, cut down costs by finding less expensive ways to spend grant monies and determine priorities. Reitzel has spoken with Hunting and feels he does a good job with care of town roads. Per Reitzel, paving is not necessarily the solution to the problems with Montague Road which is no worse than all

the other dirt roads in town that he toured; engineering support allows towns to take on more than they are used to, offers the opportunity to understand new processes and opportunities, assistance with estimating projects, and participation in buy direct programs versus purchasing through contractors. Montague Road needs to be fixed before paving; has seen 1998 report – ¾ of work of that work has been done; current pricing structure is different; work could be done for less; reduce burden on Hunting. Reitzel notes the need to consider watershed/permitting; has worked with others on bundled Notices of Intent/Orders of Conditions for highway departments; DEP regulations have been updated; other towns have had success with bundled Orders. Reitzel offers to meet with Select Board at a future time about what he has to offer to assist the Town. Puleo: Hunting needs to be present for meeting noting that there are differing opinions on how to fix Montague Road and the need to work with landowners. Reitzel suggests the Town think about a template for solutions to dirt road problems then consider the specifics of each dirt road. Fleischaker/SCC: need for the Shutesbury Conservation Commission (SCC) to be included in the conversation with Reitzel, Hunting, and the Select Board; SCC working on completing a road maintenance NOI noting that review by an engineer could be beneficial. DeChiara asks if there is public money that comes without stipulations? Reitzel: each funding source has stipulations; Wendell has received grant monies to assist with maintenance of DCR access roads. Puleo: plan for topic to be on an agenda after May Town Meeting; notes need to allow sufficient time for discussion. Reitzel states his willingness to meet with the SCC prior to meeting with the Select Board. Vinsky: Hazard Mitigation Grant could be a potential source of funding for culvert replacement. At 7:09 Reitzel leaves the meeting.

- 3. Visioning Proposal:** Lacy introduces Judi Barrett/RKG Associates, Inc.; Barrett is known in the community planning, master planning and affordable housing fields; met with the Group for Civil Communication (GCC) last summer and advised how the community could move forward in the visioning/master planning process. Lacy: the Planning Board (PB) would like the visioning proposal on this Town Meeting's Warrant. Since the last Select Board meeting, Lacy wrote a response to concerns raised at that meeting and notes Meryl Mandell's letter as well (both are included in the "Scope of Services" packet). Per Lacy, if the Town supports the project, Barrett would submit a bid. Torres: any other potential candidates would have the same opportunity to come before the Select Board. Stein: money a concern; last meeting's conversation quickly devolved into the library issue; Stein and Puleo were on the Select Board that made the decision for the second library vote; their leadership has been questioned; concerned that the visioning process is not coming forward in a clean way; the GCC is not a town committee; is soliciting participation in a visioning process realistic in our community; wound around library – healing scab

got ripped off; town needs to continue healing – does not see visioning as the way to heal. Barrett: it is common to update a master plan, Shutesbury’s needs to be updated after 10 years; visioning for a master plan is multifaceted; focusing on the big picture for a community gives folks another way to talk. Barrett: the thing that gets people to participate is to be asked; has used a strategy of having folks invite those they like and those they don’t; “I may not like you but we all have a stake in the process;” personal outreach matters a lot. Vinskey states that it is his personal feeling that to do the next master plan there is a need for people to set aside their differences in order to accomplish communication. Barrett: communities start in different ways, initially taking stock of what has been done under the current plan, where you’ve been, then decide how to go forward; getting people to talk in order to find where there are common interests and common connections. In Barrett’s experience, visioning could do this. Puleo states her concern that more divisiveness will be created by putting Town money into a visioning process citing folks who would not pay a \$20/year increase in taxes to support a library facility they would never use; doesn’t think we are ready for a visioning process. Puleo: the Planning Board needs to look at the current Master Plan noting that a survey was used at the time the current plan was written. Lacy: the Master Planning Committee did the survey. Puleo notes the need to educate the town about the current Master Plan and the need to fund visioning in a different way to acknowledge those with fiscal concerns. Barrett: in every town she has worked with on master planning, most people had no idea about their town’s master plan; education is a part of the process; while they are shaping the updated master plan folks are learning about their town; important for town officials to learn what residents think about their master plan. Lacy: new zoning associated with current master plan. DeChiara suggests the Planning Board look at the master plan identifying where we are now, what we have accomplished; push the visioning out a year and have the Planning Board come to Town Meeting next year with a review; would not support use of public money on a process we are not yet ready for. Kate Cell asks what kinds of communication agreements are forged among those going through the process and would the facilitation be specific to address these agreements. Barrett: there would be a conversation about communication ground rules; ways to allow those with more to share are found while, at the same time, allowing the group to move forward. Lyons: process could wait one year, though underlying issues would not be dealt with; realizes library brought up existing issues; believes opportunity is now. Barrett: time doesn’t heal; regarding the public trauma of the library issue, folks need to find a way to communicate with one another as a community; the Planning Board could take a year to review the master plan though this won’t address the issue of how the community works together and communicates with one another more constructively. Puleo cites the lack of trust between two groups; the library was vehicle for manifesting this lack of trust. Stein: population increased thirty years ago

and transformed town. Barrett: compressed change is difficult for a community; this is an opportune time to talk about change. Robert Raymond: identifies with the lack of trust and supports Lyons' observations; use process as a vehicle to deal constructively. Mosher, citing the World Café process, notes that there could be many ways for people to come together, voluntarily, to talk about topics such as taxes, spending, the library; feels visioning is a mammoth process and is concerned about use of \$10K; sees little pieces happening, such as, last Friday's Select Board dinner; recognizes the need for more people on committees. Stein: committee work creates vulnerability; affirms Mosher's sense of an organic process, i.e. community dinner, community clean up. Vinskey agrees that one gets to know people by doing things together; is concerned, on the business side, that people are afraid to speak up at Town Meeting; people need to know that they can participate in town government without feeling they will be attacked or experience uncivil behavior. Lacy: lion's share of the work on the Master Plan is done by the Master Planning Committee; suggests that this committee could be formed in advance, receive some advice from a consultant, then the consultant would step back while the committee reviews the current plan - which could take maybe 6 months. Ria Windcaller: seems like visioning is already happening; issues could be many things, i.e. speeding limit on lake; emphasizes the need to be willing to try and the need for more communication about what is happening in town, i.e. SAC dinner – would have loved to come; how will we know if we don't try at the grass roots level using resources we already have in town; there is a need for more communication about how people can participate and contribute. Cell suggests a presentation about outreach mechanisms/vehicles residents can use to know about what is happening in town, such as, Next Door Shutesbury. Cell states she is conflicted – is the visioning proposal a confidence building measure or do we need more confidence before the process; notes the need to be able to talk with one another and cites the dinner and road-side cleanup as confidence building measures demonstrating that we can work together; World Café, with communication agreements, builds confidence to communicate. DeChiara notes the common desire to move forward, however, going forward with a publicly funded visioning process is a forced conduit; using the master plan to facilitate a conversation is too formal. Stein: the attendance of folks with differing views over many meetings is the process. Puleo: the visioning proposal could be put on the warrant, with enough signatures, without the Select Board making a vote. Puleo asks how the group plans to get the support needed to pass a warrant article. Lacy: talk; nine other members of the GCC along with the PB and other groups are in support of process; a strong Town Meeting presentation will be needed. Barrett: visioning is not a substitute for or in competition with what is happening now; it comes down to the willingness of folks to work together; encourages the community to continue to do what is being done. Stein appreciates Barrett's willingness to take time to meet with the Select Board.

Vinskey: would we be wasting our time to do the master plan without a visioning process? Barrett: phase one of the process focuses on where have we been, where are we now and where do we want to go as a community. Vinskey: can we do visioning on our own? Barrett: yes, you can do it on your own; a consultant brings experience, trends, knowledge from the “outside” and has staff to assist, and brings capacity to the process; consultant provides a framework. Windcaller suggests it would be a good step to go right into review of the master plan and see what occurs; cites the satisfaction of doing work for ourselves. Stein: how are we going to tell the story of who we are? Cell: are we willing to let someone like Barrett facilitate the conversation; are we willing to make the necessary communication agreements? At 8:05pm, Barrett leaves the meeting. Puleo appreciates those in attendance and the thoughtfulness expressed.

4. **MBI/Wired West Update:** Antonellis appreciates Torres long participation on the Wired West committee; 71% of our 40% have signed up. Torres: the Wired West Executive Committee met last Saturday (3/21/15) with a focus on getting information out to communities, getting the necessary language for warrant articles ready for upcoming Town Meetings; talked about the mailing and its associated problems; to reach more households, a second mailing will go out. Torres: another Executive Committee meeting with the full board and the director of the Mass Broadband Institute (MBI) will be held tomorrow evening (3/25/15). Puleo: during Saturday’s Rosenberg Municipal Conference, MBI had an information sheet with incorrect cost comparisons between Leverett and Wired West. Torres: MBI compared one gig for all of Leverett undelimited to one gig delimited of Wired West individual service and called it apples to apples with Wired West costs represented to be higher than Leverett’s; Wired West will actually be less than Leverett; Leverett will not be offering any video services. Torres: there is more work to do to improve communication between MBI and Wired West; the Broadband Committee’s communications sub-committee will meet tomorrow and information forums will be held on 3/26/15 and 3/28/15. Vinskey: used the cost calculator comparison and found that Broadband will be \$40/month more than he is paying now. Torres: one of the factors in the cost tool is the inclusion of property tax in the net cost. Vinskey: concerned that folks may drop out due to cost. Torres: it is important to consider property values with/without Broadband; the first Wired West commitment is to repay town’s debt and if that repayment goes as scheduled, residents will not have a property tax impact. Puleo notes children’s educational needs, home business needs, and potential services to elders that could be met with Broadband. Torres: forums will talk about these issues; tax relief is possible if project is kept public; cites need for more communication. DeChiara: one of the founding members of the original Broadband Committee; the cost/benefit analysis of the 2004-5 early meetings showed the issue to be so big and complex that it was clear we could not do it

ourselves; Wired West is a collaborative regional approach model; it needs to work now or the opportunity will go away; western mass legislators are in support; there are no private sector investment incentives. Vinskey cites the concerns of those without internet service now and don't expect to use it in the future and will have to pay via tax; is the inability to sell one's house with out Broadband a reality? Vinskey is concerned about sign-up rates slowing. Torres: a significant number of mail-ins have arrived at the Wired West office and are waiting to be processed. Antonellis notes the importance of the forums in answering folks' questions. Torres: some folks are waiting for the information sessions to make up their minds; MBI will be advised to verify information they put out about Wired West. Puleo: our Town needs to stand behind Wired West to ensure Wired West gets its share of funding through MBI. Windcaller: Internet access is a safety issue; important in getting information out. Arvanitis: the forums will inform us as to what the issues and concerns are; as part of the master planning process, looking to create more commercial businesses, recalls an accountant who moved out of town as could not conduct business without Broadband.

**5. Committee and Other Updates:**

- Emergency Management Team: Replacement for Michael Freedman/911 Coordinator remains pending; Torres has a job description for this position. Next meeting 4.20.15.
- Proposed Cowsls' Solar Project: Site chosen for its proximity to the substation. New England Environmental will have a preliminary meeting with SCC 3.26.15.

**6. Select Board 3.20.15 SAC Dinner:** a lot of fun was had by all; some folks did not come due to snowy roads; even as the dinner was freely offered by the Select Board, \$88 donations were received \$50 of which went to Shutesbury Athletic Club for rental of room; balance will be placed in a "gift" fund. All agree to hold another Select Board dinner in the future.

**7. Review of 2015 Town Meeting Warrant and Budget:**

1. Standard.
2. Sponsors noted; requires 2/3rds vote; two to three weeks after Town Meeting, a ballot vote for debt exclusion will be scheduled. Puleo notes need to set the date for this vote at the next Select Board meeting. Could absentee ballot request forms for the debt exclusion vote be available at Town Meeting?
3. Standard.
4. Torres: per Arvanitis/FinCom, actuarial will be done next year.
5. Torres: amount still needs to be verified by FinCom; \$99,820 represents principle and interest on the fire truck. Puleo requests a FinCom/Capital Planning update for the next Select Board meeting.

6. Septic Betterment amount is certain; some of the other amounts will be adjusted.
7. Removed carpet will be replaced with rubber tiling that is holding up well in other areas of the school.
8. New mower for the SHD.
9. Routine.
10. Routine.
11. Standard/allow Treasurer to borrow.
12. Routine/grants.
13. Standard.
14. Puleo notes need to work on timing of when reports are heard.
15. Articles 15-19 may all be related to the Community Preservation Committee.
20. Revolving funds.

Puleo: order of the Articles looks okay for now. Torres: Penny Kim/Town Moderator will attend the 4/7/15 Select Board meeting for further review of the Warrant. Torres: the Warrant will be posted seven days before Town Meeting; the budget and Warrant along with Kim's brochure "*A User's Guide to Town Meeting*" will included in a separate town-wide mailing; the April issue of *Our Town* will go out earlier in the month and include information about the Select Board forums scheduled for 4/22 and 4/29/15. Puleo plans to attend the 4/7/15 Council on Aging Luncheon and be available afterward to talk about the budget.

8. **Regional Assessment Review Committee Charge:** All agree to carryover review of Vinskey's proposed charge until after Town Meeting.
9. **Executive Session:** None.

#### Select Board Action Items:

1. No meeting minutes are presented for approval
2. Payroll Warrants totaling \$89,253.80 are signed.
3. Vendor Warrants totaling \$137,042.17 are signed.
4. Town Administrator's contract is unanimously approved and signed by the Select Board.
5. Fire Department Chief/Emergency Management Director's contract is unanimously approved and signed by the Select Board. The Chief will receive a one-time increase of an additional 2% added to the base salary for the first year of this contract; this will then be the base salary going forward. Line 81 of the budget shows a 4% increase representing this 2% and the 2% proposed increase for all Town employees. It is noted that the Fire Chief does not get over-time pay. Puleo: hard to get comparables as no other small towns have full time chiefs. Stein notes that the TA does not get overtime.
6. Letter to Janice Stone/Open Space Committee recognizing Torres/TA as the Town's Americans with Disabilities Coordinator and Affirmative Action Officer is unanimously approved and signed. This letter will be included in the updated Open Space Plan.

### **Topics the Chair could not reasonably anticipated:**

- 1. Candidates Forum:** A proposal for a community forum to meet candidates for election, at May's Town Meeting, to take place at the school at 4pm Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> has been brought to Puleo's attention. The event would be a "meet and greet" for the Select Board candidates Makepeace-O'Neil and DeChiara as well as other candidates running for elected positions; there could be a session of moderated planned questions followed by questions from the audience. Makepeace-O'Neil and DeChiara agree to participate. It is proposed that the pre-formulated questions be given to Makepeace-O'Neil and DeChiara beforehand; then moderate the audience questions. Arvanitis notes need to be aware of placing the candidates in the position of an unplanned debate. Makepeace-O'Neil suggests informal questions and a more casual "meet and greet" setting which will allow more folks to ask questions. Torres recommends a more controlled situation with a tight set of questions. Puleo notes need for all to hear the answers. Antonellis: audience could write their questions on cards. Puleo: event cannot be held at the Shutesbury Athletic Club because it is not accessible to those with religious restrictions and/or alcohol concerns; sought guidance on this question from Healy/State Attorney General during the Rosenberg Municipal Conference. Puleo: event will be informal and set up in a way so that all can hear the questions and what the candidates are saying; standard questions, such as those used by the League of Women Voters, will be given to the candidates in advance.
- 2. MassDOT Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP):** Torres: MassDOT has issued Shutesbury a contract for \$20,294 in reimbursements for road repairs resulting from harsh winter weather; Hunting is planning crack repair and filling of pot-holes. Torres will ask MassDOT if a "hot pot" for asphalt, \$10,000 estimated cost, could be covered by this contract; it is unclear whether equipment costs are covered under this program. Work must be completed between April and June of this year. Select Board unanimously approves acceptance of the MassDOT WRAP contract; sign-off is completed.
- 3. FRCOG Vehicle Fuel Bid:** Per Torres, the current FRCOG diesel and unleaded fuel contract is for \$4/gallon - much higher than market price. Torres explains that the Town has not gone out to bid for heating fuel because the decision to switch to propane is pending; for the past two seasons, it has worked out well for the Town to have market priced heating fuel to be delivered on a schedule. When the Town Hall switches to propane, tanks will be purchased allowing the Town to change vendors as needed. The cost of a FRCOG bid is \$150. The Regional School only bids on heating fuel. Select Board agrees to pay

the \$150 FRCOG fee for a vehicle fuel bid then re-evaluate participation once the price/gallon is known.

4. **Department of Local Services Survey:** Vinskey asks if others are aware of the request for feedback. Torres will ask other departments for their feedback

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the meeting:

1. Scope of Services for “Shutesbury Master Plan Update: Community Visioning/Goals/Objectives/Policies,” 3/11/15 letter from Jeff Lacy, and 3/13/15 letter from Meryl Ann Mandell.
2. Emergency Management Team 3/16/15 meeting agenda with notes by Vinskey with the 3/16/15 draft “Shutesbury EOC Activation Phases” by Mark Foster.
3. Cowl’s Proposed Solar Project 3/12/15 presentation summary by Vinskey.
4. 3/24/15 Draft 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant and Budget.
5. MassDOT WRAP contract packet.
6. FRCOG fuel bid contract.

Next meeting is scheduled for 4/7/15 at 6:30pm. Vinskey will be available via Skype.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary